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MR. CHURCHILL'S TEAM

DURING the last war we had in effect two Foreign Secretaries, Sir Edward Grey and Lord Robert Cecil. Inevitably in this war our Ambassador in Washington will influence Britain's policy hardly less than the man who directs it at Downing Street. That is so to-day when the United States is in everything but the name our ally, and it will be even more obviously true as we approach the moment for a settlement. Such considerations were, we take it, in Mr. Churchill's mind when he decided to send Lord Halifax to America and restored Mr. Eden to Downing Street. We are not sure that the first effect of the choice upon American opinion will be favourable, for after Mr. Chamberlain it held Lord Halifax responsible for the policy that led up to the war and important United States newspapers have quite recently suggested that Lord Halifax's departure from the Foreign Office would be an appropriate gesture when asking for American help. But Lord Lothian went to Washington with the same reputation, and easily managed to live it down. One truth about Lord Halifax is that he was always an almost excessively loyal lieutenant. He had grown doubtful of appeasement long before Mr. Chamberlain did, and though he must bear a full share of responsibility for the foolish treatment of the U.S.S.R. before and after the occupation of Prague, he was far more ready to recognise the necessity of a Soviet alliance than Mr. Chamberlain ever was. To take another illustration of this failure to assert his own view: Lord Halifax allowed himself to be blamed for the closing of the Burma road, to which he was strongly opposed. As Americans come to know him they are likely to appreciate in him the quality that appealed also to Indians—an unusual moral distinction and a religious outlook which has little in common with that of the main body of the party to which he belongs. He belongs to the old Tory tradition, not to the world of pluto-democracy. In temperament Mr. Roosevelt, a fighting man who loves to experiment boldly, may be poles apart from him, but they share this ethical approach to political problems. In Mr. Cordell Hull, who belongs like himself in thought and courtesy to an older and more gracious century, he should find at once a congenial collaborator.

Mr. Eden is a popular figure: we have still to see whether he is capable of instilling a more forward policy at the Foreign Office. He perceived the menace of Nazi-Fascism before the majority of his party: he was almost as misguided as his colleagues about the Spanish war, but he had the sense to see through Mussolini's bluff and bluster. He resigned partly on the issue of the "gentleman's agreement" and partly on the deeper issue of appeasing the Nazis. We base no bright hopes on any speedy change of front in Moscow, but it is an appreciable gain that the Russians remember Mr. Eden as the first British Minister—and the last—who dared to break the ice of a prolonged boycott by visiting them as a friend. It matters even more that from one end of Europe to the other the submerged nations will realise that British policy is now directed by a man who, in spite of the traditions and recent record of his party and class, cannot be for a moment suspected of any covert affinity with Fascism.

Mr. Eden has no light task in front of him. He returns to direct a team of Civil Servants and diplomatists which includes a bigger percentage of ultra-reactionaries than any other Ministry. These men have lived their lives remote from the masses: their sojourn abroad made them familiar with drawing-rooms and churches but never with workshops: they can adjust themselves to financiers and industrialists but not to the leaders of the unknown classes beneath them. They can grasp more easily the mind of the Japanese feudal caste than that of the European working mass. If Mr. Eden is ready to confront the biggest problem of this war—the task of rallying to our standard the peoples first of France and Italy and eventually of Austria and Germany—he will discover that he has everything to begin and much to undo. Around him are men who believe that the Hapsburg legend can be restored in Central Europe, that some less aggressive and more clerical type of Fascism is the solution for Italy, or that a combination of Junkers and bankers could manage the German people. Our propaganda has been ineffective, because it had no resolute popular direction. The fear of Bolshevism obsessed it, so that it dared advance no positive political objective, and it exposed itself to the double reproach that its aim was to Balkanise Europe and stereotype the old hierarchy of classes, Mr. Eden goes to his new post with a great fund of sympathy and good-will on which to draw. On one front the moment is particularly auspicious for a bolder policy in the Foreign Office. In the Mediterranean British and Greek arms have combined to produce a situation in which the right propaganda may work wonders. Mr. Churchill's great broadcast on Monday night showed a full realisation of this possibility. His appeal to Italy was sincere as well as brilliantly phrased; skilful as well as lofty in its tone. We should have welcomed an outspoken condemnation of the Fascist regime; sooner or later we shall find that our appeal must be to the common people of Italy. But it is true that Italy is to-day to an unusual extent dominated by one man, and it may well have been wise tactics to concentrate the attack upon the Duce, who is personally responsible for Italy's entry into a war which every Italian now knows to be as futile as it was unjustified.

Mussolini's Two Wars

Passive defence of their strong positions is as much as the Italians can manage in either of the war zones. Bardia holds out, but it is now besieged, and reinforcements are arriving to deal with the two Divisions isolated within its lines. The Greeks at the moment of writing have not yet entered Tepelini or Klissoura, but the Italians are said to be evacuating both places. The most significant event of late in the Albanian campaign has been the unopposed bombardment of Vallona by our battleships and cruisers, which seem to have won for themselves complete freedom of action in the Adriatic. This means that the enemy cannot throw reinforcements into Albania, unless perhaps by air. In this connection a report by Marshal Graziani on the Libyan campaign, issued by the Italian semi-official news agency, is decidedly interesting. He rejects the excuse that his army at Sidi Barrani was surprised: he had warned it to expect an early attack. His explanation of the defeat is that it never received the necessary reinforcements of lorries and tanks from Italy, which should have enabled it to take the offensive: in other words, our Navy stopped them. He maintains that the British mechanised forces greatly outnumbered his own. This is untrue, if we may rely on General Wavell's order of the day before the attack. The Italians seem to have had a local superiority in numbers, and behind the vanguard at Sidi Barrani was an army that is believed to outnumber ours by about two to one. The Marshal insists that the battle was bloody and that many Italian detachments were completely wiped out, a statement that does not square with the capture of over 30,000 prisoners. Apart from the demoralisation of some of his troops, a great part of the responsibility for this defeat falls on the Marshal himself, who seems to have conceived this campaign in terms of the "native" wars with which he was familiar. He pitted Libyan levies against British and Dominion troops, and erected crenellated stone walls to face our artillery. Such mistakes could now be corrected if Graziani were capable of self-criticism: but with the Italian fleet out of action a local recovery on land could only delay the end.

Economic Notes (*by an Industrial Correspondent*)

What about ships—and shipyards? I am just puzzled by the apparent failure of the Admiralty's merchant shipping department to do anything effective to get our derelict shipyards back into use. I know Shipbuilders' Security—surely the most anti-social of all capitalism's restrictive monopolies—has done its best to make this difficult by razing the yards to the ground, and disposing of the sites under covenants which prevent them from ever being used again for building ships. But such covenants cannot hold good in wartime; and if we are planning ahead, surely we ought to be making the maximum use both of our surviving yards and of such sites as can be speedily re-equipped for building standard vessels at top speed. Incidentally, is Northern Ireland's shipyard capacity and supply of skilled shipyard labour being fully used? Many yards must, of course, be kept for speedy repair of damaged vessels, or for naval building; but the more numerous these yards are, the greater is the need for reopening others which have been closed and dismantled in recent years. The Cabinet has recently rejected the proposal to separate merchant shipbuilding from the Admiralty; but I wonder if the decision is right. The Admiralty is running the naval side of the war magnificently, as far as we are able to judge. Is it equally good on the merchant shipping side—at extracting supplies of steel from the Priority authorities, for example, or at ensuring that the shipbuilding firms do not carry on their favourite policy of restricting output with a view to the future, even during the war?

* * *

I am told that one difficulty in the way of satisfactory progress in training schemes is that there is a real lack of trainees. If that is so, it must be because of flaws in the schemes, and not because there is any absolute shortage. The essential features of successful training schemes should be, first, that they should offer a full assurance of employment at the end of the training period, not too far from the place where the training is given (or alternatively, with full explanation at the beginning of the course of the amount of migration required); and secondly that enough difference shall be made in training allowances between unskilled trainees and skilled workers, used to relatively high wages, who are required to adapt their skill to a different use. Another essential, of course, is that the training shall be well done, and in the right proportions as between trade and trade. A lop-sided training scheme, producing, say, fitters at full speed, but only a trickle of machine-workers, is bound to produce discouragement and discontent. The problem here is to persuade the authorities to release enough machine-tools for training purposes. But, if someone really gave his mind to it, could not a fair number of machines that are of no great use for war production—such as small brass-finishing lathes—be made quite useful for training, in which the main thing, for the main body of trainees, is to acquire machine sense?

* * *

Again there is talk about pensioning off the older workers who have been out of employment for a long time. It is yet another oddity of war that this—an excellent notion a few years ago—should become "practical politics" just as we are about to enter on a phase of war in which the great problem will be a serious net shortage of man-power. Quite soon, there will be anxious appeals to ageing workers not to give up their jobs at the normal retiring age, and to those who have retired to come back and replace younger workers; for at any rate by the spring, when the army can be got again under canvas, there will be a really acute shortage of male workers in many of the industries producing for civilian consumption. I am all in favour of giving the old-timers among the unemployed the right to pensions; but I doubt whether, within a few months, many of them will be available to receive them. I am quite sure most employers in the industries other than engineering have as yet no conception of the extent to which their existing male labour will be drained away if the war lasts even another year.

* * *

In my home town, some of the evacuees are getting pretty unpopular. These are mainly the unofficial evacuees, who have come out of London on their own account. Having plenty of leisure, they forage round the shops and buy up the available supplies, to the detriment of workpeople who can shop only within very restricted hours. Some of them are quite able-bodied, but show no disposition to look for any sort of work, even after they have had ample time to recover from the effects of being bombed. At any rate, that is what my local working-class friends say; and I repeat it as their opinion. If more goods were rationed, the grievances would be less; if evacuation were better controlled, there would not be so many local famines of unrationed goods; if man-power were better organised, there would not be so many able-bodied people doing nothing useful—some through their own fault, and some because they can find nothing to do. It makes the people in my home town wonder what the Government is doing, and rather confirms their notion that Governments, democratic or otherwise, very seldom do anything sensible. For that, be assured, is the opinion of nine out of every ten ordinary people; and it is a very dangerous state of mind, in a country that is supposed to be making war to save democracy.

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OURSELVES AND THE GERMANS

We have lived through a strange and terrible year and in it we have made many discoveries. One of the most remarkable is the discovery of our own courage and our capacity for adjustment. In theory the collapse of France, the German conquest of the coast line from Narvik to Bordeaux and the loss of the equipment of the entire Expeditionary Force should have meant Britain's total defeat. In anticipation air raids that destroy hundreds of buildings, kill and bury many, make thousands homeless and destitute, dislocate communications and condemn us all to long, uneasy nights in which social life, entertainment and work are all interrupted, limited and difficult—in anticipation such a prospect for great urban populations seemed totally insupportable. We talked of a war in which the army would be safer than the civilian population, but we did not imagine that such a state of affairs could last without panic or riot or coercion. Yet here we are, after four months of war upon civilians, so accustomed to bombs that we scarcely mention our narrow escapes from death, so adjusted to noise and danger that people complain that they cannot sleep on quiet nights, so apparently indifferent to the drone of the plane overhead that eighty per cent. or more of London's population sleeps in its bed as if the night was disturbed by nothing more dreadful than a thunderstorm.

According to expectation a large number of us ought long ago to have been suffering from various kinds of neuroses. Fear, we know, can be countered either by running away or by fighting back. If both these outlets are denied, shell-shock or hysteria should be rampant. The Government, which failed to provide good shelter, or to arrange for the succour of the homeless, had provided for many mental casualties; psychologists, experienced in dealing with shell-shock in the last war, waited patiently for us in well-equipped hospitals. We disappointed them. Mild and temporary cases of hysteria have been treated at first-aid stations. But there has been little or no shell-shock. How account for this surprising mental stability? Several partial explanations at once suggest themselves. First, terribly though some, especially poor, districts have suffered, the actuality of air bombardment has never proved so bad in reality as it was in imagination. Fire has been unexpectedly amenable to resolute and skilful tackling. Moreover, even in the worst places no civilian population has suffered from any prolonged bombardment such as soldiers on the Western Front often experienced without intermission in the last war. There has always been a period of hours or days in which recovery was possible. Add to these reasons the fact that people are apparently capable of vicarious fighting—of identifying themselves, that is, with the Homeric successes of the R.A.F. and, later, of finding a sporting comfort in the awesome noise of the A.A. barrage and the published accounts of the return bombardment of German docks and German towns. British experience, like that of Spain and China, seems to show that people can stand almost any danger as long as they are conscious that there is some defence and can feel a sporting interest in the battle overhead.

Yet clearly this is not the whole story. France, with what was believed to be the finest army in the world, with a history crammed with the boast of "glory," collapsed before the advance of an inferior number of Germans and submitted unconditionally after a few weeks of confused and sporadic fighting. Such a defeat has nothing to do with lack of courage; nor is this spectacular disaster adequately explained by Gamelin's obstinate refusal to extend the Maginot line or by the treachery of a number of officers and politicians. These were important factors. But the contrast between the French resistance after Sedan in 1870 and after Sedan in 1940 is a contrast between a people which wanted to resist and a people which was doubtful if it was worth the sacrifice. Civilised men will stand up to horrors that swiftly overwhelm more primitive and more warlike tribes. But just because they are not cannon fodder, just because they are thinking and sensitive beings, they are also more likely to give way if the struggle does not inspire them either by the ends it serves or the leadership it produces. A primitive man is lost outside his own tribe. A civilised man has an independent life. He is loyal rather to an idea than to a particular complex of organisations, and he may cease to feel allegiance to the organisation called the State if it does not sufficiently represent the ideas he thinks valuable. France was at least two nations at war with each other; neither the "two hundred families" nor the peasantry nor the urban working class any longer believed in the politicians or the institutions of the Third Republic. A larger part of the officer and propertied class were already prepared for a surrender to the Germans, fearing above all the surrender of their power to the dispossessed, while the urban proletariat and the peasantry dubiously followed leaders who exploited them, hid the truth from them and who were justly suspected of intrigue, graft and treason. No great figure arose to revivify the traditional France; those who led could not create a new France or tell Frenchmen for what good purpose they were asked to kill and to die. It was this internal class struggle and this lack of any honest leadership or constructive ability among the leaders of France that opened the gates to Hitler's propaganda, to Hitler's tanks, and eventually to Hitler's armies. It is because Hitler believes that the same internal conflict exists in Britain too that he no doubt still expects to win this war.

Courage we have; so have the French. Courage the Germans have—let us not fall into the silly type of self-deception that calls British airmen heroes and Nazi airmen cowards, that assumes that British people will endlessly endure bombardment, whereas the Germans will give a yelp and surrender. If the rain of bombs unites and toughens us—so, provided that Germans also continue to believe in their leaders, will experience of being bombed unite and toughen the Germans. If armaments and materials and food hold out on both sides, then we can go on bombing each other until Europe is a heap of smouldering ruins. The key is "morale"—and morale, as we have said, is not a question of courage, which we all have, but of confidence in the righteousness of our aims, trust in our leaders and faith in a future which alone can make any sense of this ghastly and lunatic game of mutual destruction.

In the business of morale there is strength and weakness on both sides. Hitler's strength is that he rebuilt Germany's confidence; that he seems to Germans indispensable; that they believe defeat would be the end, as he puts it, of Germany. They recall not the frontier settlement of Versailles, but the period of starvation after the war, the inflation and the humiliations heaped on them in their weakness. But human godhead is vulnerable; fallen from its pedestal the clay figure is dust. Hitler's record of victory is also his weakness; he cannot afford failure. Germans, as a brilliant German refugee-author in this country points out, are haunted by a myth—the myth of a conquering Siegfried whose downfall leads swiftly to twilight and humiliation. The British myth that it is necessary to lose all the early battles so that we may eventually muddle through to victory in the last battle is probably rather less dangerous. If Hitler's promises are unfulfilled, if, on the contrary, Hitler brings suffering and disaster, then Germans will recall the prophecies of intellectual leaders who are dead or in exile or who survive perhaps still in concentration camps. Their voices over the wireless or remembered from the grave may still be the strongest weapon against Hitler, provided, when the day of disillusion comes, that the hypnotised masses of Germany can see an alternative to death. Already reports agree that so far from joy in Hitler's victories there is in Germany apathy and the apprehension of disaster. Not content with incorporating Germans in the Reich, Hitler has enslaved Czechs and Poles, Norwegians, Danes, Belgians and Frenchmen. He has millions of enemies within the Reich—a Fifth Column far larger than any that can be bought or cajoled in a pluto-democracy. Hitler has gone far beyond the boundaries that every German felt to be just. When Hitler occupied Austria and the Rhineland, even when he took the Sudeten areas—he imposed no spiritual or physical load on Germany. So far all Germans believed he was restoring Germany to her rightful place in the world. But Hitler did not stop there and millions of Germans must be asking in their hearts whether the Führer can stop anywhere. War with Britain few Germans desired, while the mastery of Europe is a dictator's dream which brings to common people, not joy but rather fear of disaster; a presage of the coming twilight.

Can we make profit for the world's good out of these weaknesses in the Third Reich? If not, it is because of our own weaknesses. We know that we did not want war; that is our greatest strength. Some foolish "realists" ridicule this deep pacifism which alone gives us the conscience to fight. They teach that armaments are all; they would have us full of hatred and make us believe in a reconquest of Europe by a Grand Army. If we have no shell-shock cases, we have plenty of political lunatics, and if they get their way we shall surely lose this war. The idea of utterly and for ever crushing the hated Hun—which means apparently enslaving eighty million Germans—is the kind of nonsense that will convince no one with a mental age of over fourteen. The desire for revenge will exist after this war, and unless our statesmen have the wisdom to check it and offer a better idea it may prolong the war by forcing those in Germany who have most reason to hate Hitler to remain loyal to him. Or it may shorten the war by giving Hitler victory over a people who will certainly not remain united unless they can see nothing to fight for better than Empire, revenge and a world worse than that which followed Versailles. In truth the great mass of people in this country know that some time or other they must live in peace with the German and other European peoples ; that the economic system, which led to the last war and this war and which their rulers seem still to desire to perpetuate, is a cruel anachronism. Troops in the Maginot Line last winter discussed bitterly the follies of war and of the social injustices to which they were subjected. Do not similar thoughts sometimes pass through the minds of the less articulate British who bear this dreary winter so uncomplainingly in cold camps and dreary shelters ? Do they not equally occupy the attention and occasionally pass in the whispered conversations of German troops and German civilians ?

Hitler at least is aware that these thoughts and aspirations are now in the minds of common people everywhere. He knows, as Napoleon said, that ideas are more powerful than the arms which serve them. And he knows to-day men are no longer servants of a purely national God. So he promises a new Social Order to cover his cruelties and duplicities and lead his enemies to their destruction. His offer is the peace and security of Nazi slavery. Were it established, even for a year, the ideas of liberty, equality and fraternity on which he has declared war would again become rallying cries of revolt wherever the Nazi gangster and the Gestapo bully fattened on loot and trampled on the free spirit. Yet he is wise in announcing a new social order of peace and security, because, though men will fight periodically for liberty, they are to-day above all conscious of the monstrous absurdity of war and of the economic system out of which it has arisen. Liberty, equality and fraternity, the foundations on which democracy is nominally founded, have not meant freedom from exploitation or the fraternal enjoyment of our European heritage. Yet to-day men know that economic prosperity is possible ; they know that a Balkanised Europe is a ludicrous anachronism. Men will still fight for "the rights of man"—but only if these rights include the right to secure a fair share in the world's immeasurable wealth. In the long run, whoever wins this war, the loyalty and allegiance of the population of Europe will go to the man, nation or party which does not, as Hitler does, intolerably outrage the common decencies, but who does in reality offer an economic order of unity and plenty. This should be our main war-aim—and it needs planning as much as any military campaign. Without such an economic plan to give reality to our propaganda no campaign for the liberation of Europe will succeed.

COMMUNAL MEALS

War has this compensation : that it smashes individualist traditions and compels men to realise that they form a community. A most promising development has been the growth of communal meals. The Ministry of Food is not hampered by a venerable past : a jungle of red-tape requires several decades to reach maturity. Under Lord Woolton, with only a handful of civil servants on the staff, it has shown both enterprise and fresh thinking. The gigantic task of controlling the import, storage and distribution of food for the whole population might well have occupied all its energies. But since the aerial *Blitzkrieg* grew serious, it has had to concern itself with the provision of communal cooked meals. Mr. Bevin saw the need for maintaining the health and cheerfulness of the munition workers, toiling in peril and under excessive strain. The children and mothers evacuated to the country from dangerous areas had to be cared for. In Coventry and other stricken towns where the housewife was for a time without water, electricity or gas, even when her house was undamaged, neighbouring cities and the Army rushed to the spot with their mobile kitchens and canteens. Finally, all over the country, certain categories of wage-earners together with the old-age pensioners presented the most difficult problem of all. While the cost of living has risen steeply, their incomes have stood still.

The Ministry has followed the usual English technique. It has not attempted to create a centralised machine, but it required and stimulated and helped the local authorities to act. Every factory with a staff of 200 employees is now required to provide a canteen for its workers. Some supply hot meals at a low charge (10*d.* or 1*s.*) in cheerful surroundings : others do the minimum and sell only sandwiches and cakes with tea or hot soup. Where they notoriously fail, the local authority steps in. Happily the local authority usually had a nucleus which it could expand. Thanks to the provision of cheap meals to children in elementary schools, a staff of capable and enthusiastic teachers of domestic economy was available to direct the many willing volunteers, and behind them was an adequate experience of buying food in bulk. To extend this system to children in secondary schools and to the evacuees was fairly easy. The really exciting adventure began only a few weeks ago, with the opening all over the country in the poorer districts of municipal restaurants for the workers. The Ministry offered the necessary equipment free, and some of it has been manufactured by mass production to its orders. These meals are open to all.

" What," the reader may ask, " does private enterprise say, when a municipality offers at 6*d.* a better meal than it would sell at 1*s.* 3*d.* or 1*s.* 6*d.* ? So far the answer is easy. These public restaurants have as yet been opened only in districts so poor that they would not tempt a profiteering concern. " But " said I to one of the men who inspired this scheme, " when people throughout the city realise what you are doing, will they not flock to your communal meals ? " " I hope so," said he. " And won't you have to expand ? " Again he hoped so. " And must not a system so beneficent become permanent ? " Once more he had hopes.

I chose the shattered riverside area of East London for a visit of exploration. Many streets, oddly enough the main thoroughfares, are nearly normal and thronged with traffic. Behind them may lie a stretch of several acres where nothing remains but tangled ruins. Around such areas stretch mean little streets of two-storeyed buildings, whose walls look intact, but on a closer view the windows gape open and some of the woodwork is charred. I heard an estimate, which I neither question nor confirm, that half the dwellings in the regions round the docks are now uninhabitable. Amid this devastation I first visited an elementary school—the laboratory of the whole rapidly expanding system. The kitchen was spacious and spotlessly clean and the women in it worked quietly and with method. A happy buzz of talk came from the class-rooms where the children were at dinner. They drank from pleasantly coloured mugs which, like the gaily coloured table-cloths, had been specially designed and manufactured for these schools. The food was wholesome and well cooked and an ample meal cost the incredible sum of 3*d.* Any child could ask for a second portion and more than half of them did so.

In another school over two hundred adults dined daily and in a third over five hundred. The usual landscape with its many varieties of devastation, some brutal and some fantastic, lay around them. One of these schools had been struck in the terrific raids of that memorable first week-end of September. Every window was shattered and when Miss Anderson, the manager of the whole enterprise, a woman who evidently knows how to organise and also how to win the devotion of all who serve under her, visited it at 6 a.m., it had neither gas, water nor electricity. The engineers wrought miracles under the stimulus of her determination and by noon the first cooked dinners were ready as usual. A long line of men and women, with the men predominating, were buying their tickets as I entered. It was a cold raw day and many looked tired and a few were dirty. Where in this devastation can they wash ? Most of them sleep in shelters, some of them on the bunks which Mr. Morrison has provided, but some still on the ground. I could sense in my own body their feeling of ease and relief as they entered the warm and friendly room and surveyed what they might choose for 6*d.* You can buy for this sum one of three dishes of meat and vegetables and one of three sweets. The quantity was generous ; the quality all one could ask, and once more the kitchen was a model of cleanliness and order. Best of all there was an atmosphere of kindliness and respect. Free citizens were helping one another to live while all, men and women together, faced the common danger. The usual cheap restaurant run for profit is incomparably less pleasant and less efficient, and its staff is sweated to the bone.

The economics of this new municipal venture belong to the improvisations of wartime. The charge of 6*d.* covers the cost of the food bought in bulk. The Borough gives free the building, the electric current and the services of the staff, but even if a charge were made hereafter for these overheads, a fantastically cheap meal could still be provided at 8*d.* Many of the social gains of the last war, the admirable controls of foods and raw materials for example, were lost when the profiteers assailed them, because they had worked invisibly and the average man never knew what he gained. But his senses tell him all he need know about socialised meals. As I journeyed home through a city still, after months of battering, mainly intact, I wondered will any poet ever adequately sing the devotion of its common people—the boys who defend its liberty in the air, the women who know what community means, and the stoical endurance of these dockers who work all day in peril and sleep in squalor under arches ?

H. N. Brailsford

A LONDON DIARY

WHAT do most of us know about Captain Margesson? We may have heard some of the innumerable stories about his shrewd management of the Tory majority in the House and heard grim tales of the fate of Conservatives independent enough to oppose the Chamberlain policy. We may have read "Watchman's" bitter attack and marvelled to hear Mr. Vyvyan Adams in officer's uniform denouncing him from the floor of the House. We may have noticed that ever since the party truce came into force Conservatives of the Chamberlain school were carefully placed in each vacant seat and we may have wondered whether Mr. Churchill would not sooner or later want a chief whip who had not so able a record in frustrating the policy Mr. Churchill stood for. Well, Mr. Churchill has moved him to the War Office where he will have brass hats instead of M.P.s to manage. If he whipped M.P.s with whips perhaps he has scorpions for generals? No doubt they will get a three line whip when the time comes for an offensive.

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Recently I wrote of the struggle of Chinese seamen in British ports to obtain a war-risks bonus. I am glad to record this week that the Anglo-Saxon Petroleum Company, which employs about 8,000 of the 20,000 Chinese working on the British register, has now agreed to pay their crews £5 a month bonus. Presumably the other companies must now follow suit. I should like to attribute this concession to the Christmas spirit, but I fear the facts would belie me. British, Dutch, Norwegian and other sailors who keep us alive in spite of German submarines are, of course, still far better paid than the Chinese, and they have had a war-risks bonus ever since the outbreak of war. But the odd notion persists that a Chinese can live on the smell of an oil-rag, and that if he is drowned there are so many Chinese widows anyway that it really does not matter. The Chinese are changing all that. They are fighting the Axis, as we are, and they are learning to look after themselves. Long months of negotiation with the Ministry of Shipping on behalf of these sailors produced no results until last July the Chinese seamen won recognition for themselves by forming a Union in Great Britain, which was soon affiliated to the National Seamen's Union and then to the International Transport Workers' Federation. The Ministry continued to "stall"—why, goodness knows, when we so desperately needed the goodwill and services of these seamen, until in October a number of the men refused to sail until they were given the war-risks bonus. There never was any good reason for refusing them what the sailors of other countries had been given without question. But it was not until there was the possibility of a serious strike in the ports that they won their way. That, unfortunately, is how the Christmas spirit still works between employer and employed.

* * *

In the judgment delivered in the House of Lords, Lord Simon has endeavoured to lay down new principles for determining the damages to be awarded for loss of expectation of life. Lord Simon was of the opinion that a decision was not to be reached by applying bald statistical or actuarial tests. The thing to be valued was not the prospect of length of days, but the prospect of a predominantly happy life. It would be fallacious to assume for this purpose that all human life was continuously an enjoyable thing, so that the shortening of it called for compensation, to be paid to the deceased's estate, on a quantitative basis. It was necessary for the Court to be satisfied that the circumstances of the individual life were calculated to lead, on balance, to a positive measure of happiness, of which the victim had been deprived by the dependant's negligence. This is surely the boldest line of reasoning that ever occurred to a Lord Chancellor; it opens up abstruse and fascinating speculations. I wonder how far Lord Simon has considered its implications. A slum child is less likely to live a happy life than a child of well-to-do parents? Then the slum child's death means less compensation—which is the result anyway in a non-egalitarian society? If Lord Blimp, who happens, say, to drink a lot, loses his wife in an accident, he, too, should get very little compensation because his drinking habits made her life a misery. Will it consider whether life will be happier in the event of the political extinction of a particular politician, or the growth of a more just or a less free and more Fascist State? In the latter event, I suggest, that if a man is run over by a steamroller his estate, so far from receiving damages, should actually pay a premium to the steamroller company which saved him the misery of continued existence.

* * *

Parliament, to spite the prophets, is very much alive. I suppose most people will laugh at me if I say that I find Hansard fascinating reading. The print is now so small that my eyes ache after reading a debate, but the effort is worth while. Here are facts and ideas that do not appear in the press or on the wireless. I have just read, for instance, the entire debate of December 10th. That was the occasion when Mr. Stokes, raising the question of the detentions (mainly of Fascists) under 18B, told the grand story of the lady who fell under the dire suspicion of the police because they found in a diary in her house the entry "M.49. Destroy British Queen. Instal Italian Queen." According to Mr. Stokes, "it took them six weeks to discover that this lady kept bees, and that this entry referred to a method of improving the breed of bees by using Italian stock." Not all the debate is equally amusing, but it does show Parliament caught in the dilemma of a Liberal tradition, recalling that we are "fighting for freedom" and troubled about the dictatorial powers over the individual now conferred on the Home Secretary. They are very great powers, and the House is right to keep a watch on them. On one point I see that I did Mr. Morrison an injustice last week. It is dangerous to base any criticism on press reports of Parliament. Mr. Morrison did not say he was "fed up" with Members for raising these issues of liberty, but with Members who were once urgent for the detentions, and who now seem to forget the special circumstances in which these men were detained. Security, he urged, still comes first. Yet I think the House was right in criticising the delays in hearing the men detained and in asking why so much solitary confinement is maintained.

* * *

I am glad to note the name of Arthur Koestler among the "internees" recently released. Why he was ever interned I dare not guess. He was one of the best of the British correspondents who fell under Franco's displeasure during the Spanish war, his *Spanish Testament* with its wonderful section on the experience of expecting death in a Fascist prison should rank among British classics. Since the outbreak of war he tried repeatedly to return to England from France in order to join the forces but his applications were rejected. Since the end of June he had been slowly making his way from France to this country. When he arrived he was arrested and his new book *Darkness at Noon* (Cape 1s. 6d.) had to be sent out while he was still in Pentonville. Now, thanks to the improving sanity of the Home Office and the British people, he is again a free man.

* * *

Two welcome, if widely different, collections of a popular feature in THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION have appeared in season. *Country Notes in Wartime*, by Victoria Sackville-West (Hogarth, 2s. 6d.), and *Sagittarius Rhyming*, by Sagittarius (Cape, 5s.), whose identity has been wickedly revealed in a daily paper. Interesting how astonished people are to learn that Sagittarius is a woman. No two writers could be more in contrast; yet they will often appeal to the same audience. For in these days especially we all know the sudden change from the sentiment about the garden and countryside, which we love as we never did before, to the savage mood when the only relief is satire. Here are two ways of looking at the same thing. Miss Sackville-West records the story of the hospital protected by sandbags which had been hurriedly filled with sand and soil from neighbouring gardens. The sturdy and sodden rampart stood through the winter, and then in spring green shoots appeared, and finally the grim barricade became alive with yellow daffodils. To Sagittarius these same flowers are a reminder of the jaundiced Tory opponents of Mr. Churchill now crouching under the shadow of his wing:

> Dead daffodils, we weep to see
> You hang about so late . . .
> You are but destined for the bin
> Ne'er to be salved again.

* * *

One of the duties which has fallen on the shoulders of this country is the maintenance of the great tradition of European cartoons. As soon as Hitler came in *Simplicissimus* had to be written off. Now the witty scribbled drawings of the French have come under the hammer of conformity and the careful productions of the Dutch have been *gleichgeschaltet*. One of the artists in whose hands the tradition is Safe is Osbert Lancaster. Connoisseurs have long since discovered him in the side columns of the *Daily Express*, but latecomers can catch up with the volume of *Pocket Cartoons* (Murray, 1s. 6d.) which has just appeared. Some of his drawings remind me of the witty French scribbles: some of his eagle-nosed male and female aristocrats would be at home in the *New Yorker*. For mordancy look at the drawing on page 36 showing two Nazi children one of whom says: "You only got your daddy sent to Dachau. When I denounced Granny, she was shot." For droll satire his female dragons in uniform are quite admirable.

Here is a lyric from one of the latest American films:

Fred Cho-pin
Had his Georges San'
And Alexander
Had his rag-time ban'
Metro-Goldwyn
Has his Mayer
But I've got nobody
And nobody's got me.

There are many things to admire about the American way of life, but this is not one of them. I remember one poignant effort which contained the lines:

Although I'm rich or poor
I still will love you more.

If you repeat that half-a-dozen times you begin to wonder whether there is anything wrong with it.

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Our prize of 5/- for the contribution at the head of this column goes this week to X.Y.Z.

All cuttings should be addressed to "This England," 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1.

Wearing an old dress won't matter much if there is a mink coat to cover it.—Advert. in *Evening Standard.*

The introduction of French blood should result in Germany producing better-class horses, but there is no possibility of these being admitted to the General Stud Book.

That is a point on which breeding authority in Britain is adamant.—Daily Paper.

Mrs. ——s beloved Siamese neuter, Jo-Jo (Angus Romney) passed on peacefully following an epileptic seizure on November 1st, 1940.—*Fur and Feather.*

A woman who has a house with 21 bedrooms and 8 living rooms, but refused to take evacuees, was at Cowbridge (Glam.) yesterday fined £50 with two guineas costs. . . . For the defence it was said that Mrs. Jenkins had offered a hall and a small house for the use of evacuees. These premises were not accepted. A family of eight was already accommodated in one of Mrs. Jenkins's cottages.

THE BELLS

(After Edgar Allan Poe)

[A plea from the Archbishop of Canterbury that church bells should be rung on Christmas Day has failed . . . the bells may be rung only in the event of invasion.]

HEAR the summons of the bells,
Warning bells;
No peace and good will tidings their carolling
But loud alarums filling
The dark and watchful shires
Where the Home Guard, wildly thrilling,
After drilling, drilling, drilling,
From a thousand shaken spires
Hear the call to instant action that so clamorously swells
In the booming and the fuming of the bells, bells, bells,
Bells, bells, bells, bells,
In the crashing and the clashing of the bells.

Hear the thunder of the bells,
Tocsin bells.
What a clammy apprehension their stroke of doom compels
As the raiding hosts, sky-riding
Hear their free exultant tune
Rise up as they leave their hiding
Impotently downward gliding
From the moon,
With an icy premonition
At the failure of their mission
In the anger of the bells
Bells, bells, bells, bells,
In the clangour of the bells,
Bells, bells, bells, bells,
In the rolling and the tolling of the bells.

SAGITTARIUS

LONDON CHALLENGED

"HOWEVER disastrous it may have been to the then inhabitants, it has proved infinitely beneficial to their posterity; conducing vastly to the improvement and increase, as well of the riches and opulency, as of the splendour of this City." Written forty years after the Great Fire of 1666 had reduced the chief part of London to ashes, these words pronounced a verdict. To our London, threatened again by the forces of destruction, they resound as a challenge.

The appalling calamity which even shocked our enemies (for we were at war with the Dutch and French) might well have reduced our forefathers to despair. Within four days nearly the whole City of London was destroyed. London had been the centre of our wealth, by far the largest city in England and the main artery of our trade. Now, with its wharves, warehouses and markets, its hospitals, schools and prisons, its eighty-seven churches and great cathedral, with the Guildhall, Royal Exchange, Custom House, College of Arms and forty-four halls of the City Companies, it was nothing but a mountain of smoking débris. Eighty thousand people, silent from the magnitude of the disaster, gathered in the fields outside the city. They had lost home, possessions, means of livelihood, everything. This was before the days of machinery and mass production; systems of insurance and easy borrowing were unknown. There were no public records of the ownership of lands and properties or of the complicated interests involved. There was not so much as an up-to-date survey of the streets. To those silent multitudes it must have seemed impossible that London could ever rise again.

Yet in less than six years the impossible had happened. Nearly all the houses and public buildings were rebuilt, and for the next twenty years the churches were rising steadily. Even St. Paul's Cathedral was completed in the lifetime of its great architect. It was, moreover, a much finer city that arose. Before the Fire, London was dirty, rickety and inconvenient. Ill-shapen houses, mostly of wood and plaster, overhung narrow streets crammed with coaches and carts; pedestrians clung to the walls, in fear of their lives. The centres of important thoroughfares were obstructed by market stalls; bottlenecks and traffic jams were the order of the day. When it rained, water spouted from roof gutters on the heads of folk below and mud lay thick in streets and alleys. Down in the cellars swarmed the plague-carrying rats. Junk of all sorts littered the riverside, and Fleet Ditch, an open sewer, wormed its noisome way past the western walls and gates to empty its filth in the Thames. St. Paul's Cathedral, sadly dilapidated and long shorn of its famous spire, crowned the whole. Londoners were loud in their complaints but did little to improve conditions. They were accustomed to the dirt and inconvenience and, as the result of long familiarity, had become indulgent. Besides, no one had known where to begin.

But the new city was built of brick and stone. The streets were broadened, paved and drained. The market stalls were removed from the thoroughfares to sites of their own. Pleasing vistas were presented by streets of strong, well-built, symmetrical houses. Fleet Ditch had become a broad canal of flowing water, bordered by spacious wharves. The public buildings, in the new classical style of architecture, were dignified and often beautiful. The graceful dome of the new cathedral and the clustered steeples of the fifty new churches adorned London's skyline. This was the city, not greatly changed, that was to cause a poet to exclaim with rapture, "Earth has not anything to show more fair." And the plague was gone for good.

This splendid achievement was due to various causes; a determination which forced its way past all obstructions; unceasing labour; the generous co-operation of the whole community; and the enlightened vision of a small group of architects and surveyors led by that supreme genius, Sir Christopher Wren. King Charles himself insisted that everything possible should be done to promote "the beauty, ornament and convenience of the City." The first suggestion, that London be entirely replanned, proved to be impracticable; there was no money and no public records of property existed by which a fair system for the re-distribution of sites could be devised. As it was, great sacrifices were made by many of the citizens. A large number of properties were reduced in size and some destroyed altogether by the widening of the streets and the establishment of the markets; in these cases compensation was paid. Far more drastic were the regulations concerning the re-building of houses. All those fronting the streets had to be of a certain specified type, which Christopher Wren had a hand in designing. There were four types, according to the importance of the street, only mansion houses being exempted. The regulations governed the heights of rooms, number of storeys, thickness of walls and depth of cellars. Projections were not allowed; drain pipes must be provided; brick or stone was compulsory; jerry building forbidden. A careful watch was kept and fines were inflicted for breaches of the regulations. The whole story has been admirably told in Mr. T. F. Reddaway's fascinating book, "The Re-building of London after the Great Fire." What was once regarded as an overwhelming calamity is now hailed as London's great opportunity.

After the passage of nearly three centuries London is to have a second opportunity. No one could regard unmoved the present suffering of its people. This time they are losing not their homes and possessions only but in many cases their families and their lives. What is more, the period of tragedy is protracted; we do not know when the end will come. But we do know that it will come and with it the opportunity of building a London worthier of our age. The re-planning and re-building of the slums is being widely discussed but the challenge of 1666 is directed more particularly to the heart of the capital. We can hardly deny that London, though the largest city in the world, is again one of the ugliest and most inconvenient. There are beautiful buildings and certain portions of the capital are worthy of a great city, but they are stifled by the accumulated architectural junk of three centuries. The proportions of streets laid out in the time of Charles II are now ruined by the height of the buildings which hem them in. The buildings themselves, commonly erected without any reference to the architecture of their neighbours or to the street as a whole, give an impression of cramped dreariness. Here and there an immense edifice, bursting out of a street frontage, reduces all its neighbours to insignificance. The once famous skyline of London is confused and nowhere in its centre is there enough space. For inconvenience, what could beat the traffic problem which, under present conditions, can but get steadily worse, defying every attempt at solution because the streets are not wide enough to allow the traffic to move freely. Another absurdity is the scarcity of parking places, which means that the new facilities for rapid communication cannot be used in one of the chief business centres of the world. We now know, too, that the crowded buildings enable the maximum damage to be done by fire and high explosive.

Defoe, in his "Tour," summarises the preliminaries to the earlier re-building: "Soon after the fire the King, by his proclamation, forbad all persons whatsoever to go about to re-build for a certain time, viz., till the Parliament (which was soon to sit) might regulate and direct the manner of building as well for the beauty as the conveniency of the city and for safety in case of any future accident." London should take the hint and prepare a plan now; otherwise, immediately the war is over, re-building will begin on the old sites and the grand opportunity will be lost. We shall not have the peculiar advantage of 1666 when the entire region was devastated, but if the general plan is decided upon it can gradually be put into effect as further opportunities offer over a period of years. We suggest that the main principle should be to spread central London over a wider area. Telephones and cars make it unnecessary for the business quarter to be compressed into the narrow space it is at present; and there is no valid reason why the big shopping centres should be restricted to a mere handful of streets. Next, the great majority of main streets ought to be widened, most of them drastically. More streets should be converted into principal streets and big firms encouraged to erect their new premises in them. Wherever possible, squares, boulevards and open spaces might be established. These would add to the beauty of the capital, help to solve the traffic problem and provide parking places for cars, preferably underground and convertible into air-raid shelters in time of war; in the gardens above, facilities could be provided for 'planes landing. The tremendous economic and financial difficulties, which would undoubtedly confront such a plan, must be overcome. It is not tolerable that in our age vested interests should be allowed to stand in the way of the welfare of a great community. Even in 1666 the needs of the whole were put before the interests of individuals; the legend to the contrary has been exposed.

There follows the question of the beauty and ornament of our new London, and for these we must look to our architects. The re-building after the Great Fire may suggest certain points. Each great street or square ought to be planned as an architectural unit and even in the lesser streets regulations governing materials, height and general design should be as strictly enforced as those which concern drainage and ancient lights. Wren wrote: "In things to be seen at once much variety makes confusion, a vice of beauty. In things which are not seen at once and have no respect one to another, great variety is commendable." So with our London. Imagination will be called for in such matters as giving ancient and historic buildings suitable surroundings which set them off instead of extinguishing them. While every effort should be made to preserve the genuinely old and beautiful, if there is health in modern architecture there will be no suggestions of re-erecting copies of buildings totally destroyed. Such copies are masks and have no place among the living. Wren, be it noted, never suggested re-building St. Paul's in its former style. An addition to the beauty of the capital surely long overdue is the development of the south bank of the river, particularly below the County Hall. Pleasant gardens and well-designed buildings on both banks would give central London a spacious dignity, and the river would then be an ornament and not, as at present, a dividing line between the prosperous and the poor. This improvement might well form part of a scheme for extending central London to the south of the Thames and moving the industrial quarter farther out to the suburbs.

Finally, there is a remark of Wren's which our architects might bear in mind when their day comes: "An architect ought to be jealous of novelties in which fancy blinds the judgment: and to think his judges as well those that are to live five centuries after him as those of his own time. That which is commendable now for novelty will not be a new invention to posterity: but the glory of that which is good of itself is eternal."

Jane Lang

SOMETHING IN A NAME

At its last meeting the London County Council decided that in its services the words "Public Assistance" should disappear and be replaced by the designation "Social Welfare." As Chairman of that august body it would not be becoming on my part to make any comments upon the desirability or otherwise of this decision, but as I have been an interested observer for some time of the changes in nomenclature which represent a change in public opinion and attitude, I may be permitted to give some examples.

Government departments, so often considered lacking in humanity, have been foremost in this matter and have given the lead to charitable and philanthropic organisations. Almost twenty years have passed since the Local Government Board changed its name to Ministry of Health. The Mental Treatment Act of 1930 introduced many changes. The Lunacy Commissioners are less conspicuous but not less important as the Board of Control, the Lunatic Asylum has become a Hospital for Mental and Nervous Disorders—generally shortened to Mental Hospital—and its inmates are mental patients. The criminal lunatic is a moral defective or State mental patient. The more notorious of the London County Council mental hospitals have been given saints' names.

The reform of the Poor Law in 1929 brought numerous changes of designation. The Workhouse is no longer Union or Workhouse but the Institution. The pauper does not exist but is a rate-aided person. (In the St. Marylebone Institution there is a brass plate bearing the date MDCCLXXV which states that the building is "for the poor being lame, impotent, old and blind.") We no longer have idiots, but retarded children; the industrial school is now an approved school, and I understand that the word imprisonment is to be softened to "corrective training and preventive detention."

All these are official changes, but the same tendency, with a certain time-lag, is at work with private organisations. Many readers will recollect the Ragged School Union; it has not disappeared, but has become the Shaftesbury Society. The Reformatory and Refuge Union is now the Children's Aid Society. The Labourer's Friend Society, founded in 1842 by Edwin Chadwick, has changed its name once to the Society for Improving the Condition of the Labouring Classes, but seems ripe for another change. This may be said of other bodies, such as the Metropolitan Association for the Improvement of the Dwellings of the Industrial Classes, and the British Home and Hospital for Incurables. The name "Homes for Fallen Girls" has a harsher sound than one I discovered in a book in the London County Council Library, dated 1770, and entitled:

Magdalen Hospital for the Reception
of Penitent Prostitutes
together with
Dr. Dodd's Sermons
to which are added The Advice to
the Magdalens with the Psalms, Prayers,
Rules and List of Subscribers.

That a tendency towards euphemism is not limited to this country I discovered when, in Lille a few years ago, I saw the indication "*Banque municipale*." Scenting a valuable discovery, I interviewed the manager, only to find that I was in the municipal pawnshop! I conclude with an example perhaps outside the scope of this article, but which may be regarded as an *hors d'oeuvre*. In fact it concerns that word. Last year the Restaurants Association of America offered a considerable prize for a plain English substitute for the French menu term. The winning effort was "apitoid," but it does not seem to have reached this country up to the present.

A. EMIL DAVIES

EDUCATION TO-DAY. I.—LONDON'S CHILDREN

"WE have practically given up elementary education in despair. We have done everything we could to keep it going, but the thing has been too much for us. In London education has gone by the board." The speaker was an eminent member of the L.C.C. Were things, I wondered, really as bad as all that? Was he perhaps exaggerating? The problem, it is obvious, is a vast one and it is idle to pretend that a single article can give even an approximately complete view of the issues which it raises. Indeed, it may be doubted whether the data for a complete view are available. But here for what they are worth are the results of some enquiries which I have made with a view to verifying my friend's estimate of the situation. It will be seen that they confirm it with a melancholy completeness.

First, a few figures. Of the five million children in the country of elementary school age over a million are resident in London. Of these, all but 112,000 have been evacuated. Of the 112,000, some 90,000 are not receiving any form of education, and of the thousand schools in the L.C.C. area over 500 are, for one reason or another, no longer available.

The Board of Education has recently estimated that some 98 per cent. of the children in this country are receiving some form of education. The figure seems to me fantastically optimistic, but if it is anywhere near the truth, the position in London must be totally unrepresentative. (One wonders, by the way, what is happening in Coventry.) Even the London figure which suggests that 20,000 of the children still in the L.C.C. area are receiving some form of education is liable to err on the side of optimism, owing to the children's recently established habit of going to one school in the morning and another in the afternoon, or changing their schools from day to day in order to have the benefit of a nearer or a newer air-raid shelter, and so contriving to appear on the attendance sheets of more than one school.

The truth of the matter is that compulsory education at any rate in London no longer exists. In normal times, it is maintained by a corps of attendance officers, whose business it is to call at the homes of non-attending children, to warn the parents, and if the warning is ignored, to institute proceedings which may result in a fine and in extreme cases in imprisonment. In other words, not to send children within the prescribed ages to school is to break the law. This system has ceased to operate. In the first place, attendance officers are no longer functioning; they are engaged on evacuation or billeting schemes. Secondly, the whereabouts of many children is unknown; they may have been evacuated; they may have moved into another borough or into another street; they may be attending another school. Teachers, whose job it is to teach, try to cope, however inadequately, with the situation by turning themselves into amateur attendance officers, calling at the homes of non-attenders sometimes in school hours, sometimes outside them—the distinction has become largely illusory; the children come at any time between 8 and 10 and rarely stay after 2—"Is little Willie at home?" they ask, "Or has he been evacuated?" If he is still at home, their instructions are to urge in the first place evacuation; if evacuation is refused, they demand attendance at school, but if little Willie still fails to attend, no steps are taken to follow up the visit or to issue a summons. I am told that in the L.C.C. area nobody has been prosecuted for the non-attendance of a child since the early summer. The mothers know this and fewer and fewer children go to school.

In the absence of compulsion, some schools have tried bribery. The most successful scheme I have heard of is that of ranking the children in the military hierarchy, according to the frequency of their attendances. Attend regularly, and you become a general or at least a colonel; attend once a week and you never rise beyond a private. We live in a military age and the system is said to have had gratifying results.

Where the children are few, it might be expected that the teaching would be good, since with attendances down by 50 or 75 per cent. there would, one might suppose, be at least the possibility of giving children the individual attention which is precluded when are they herded into classes of 40 or 50. This hope, if entertained, would be illusory. To begin with, the number of teachers is sadly depleted; many have been evacuated with the children; many of those who remain have been compulsorily drafted into one or other of the emergency services, being engaged, for example, in looking after the homeless in rest shelters. Most welcome the change; "Yes," they say, "we know our job is to teach, but anything is better than trying to cope with half a dozen kids who do not come regularly; who are half asleep when they do come, and whose minds are full of bombs when they are not asleep." Anything, too, is better than to sit most of the day with the children in stuffy or draughty air-raid shelters. At the first sound of the alert the whole school goes to shelter; and when raids are frequent, a large part of the already truncated day is spent underground. "Then why not," I asked, "teach the children underground?" "We do our best, but in most shelters the job is hopeless." One shelter, for example, of which I heard, is a long covered trench. There are no facilities for teaching; no desks, no books, no ink; the light is bad and it is very difficult to read. Sooner or later, under such conditions, the children grow bored and restless. It is impossible to control them, and the raid ends with the children playing at one end of the shelter and the staff talking at the other.

Another difficulty arises from the breaking down of the division between different grades of schools. Normally, children under 5 go to nursery schools, which are closed altogether (infants between 6 and 7 have only begun to attend during the last few weeks); for children between 7 and 10 there are junior schools; for those over 10, senior schools. Nowadays, every child goes to the school nearest its home, so that children of all ages and grades are jumbled together in the same class. This makes effective teaching impossible.

The remedy for this deplorable state of affairs is obvious, though difficult. Either there should be compulsory education, or compulsory attendance for those whose parents decide not to evacuate. It is gratifying in this connection to note that the L.C.C. in conjunction with the Board of Education have recently accepted this principle and announced their intention of ensuring that attendance in London shall once again be compulsory. Compulsory education is no doubt difficult to maintain, but it wasn't always difficult and it ceased to be compulsory before it became difficult. That it should have come to an end with the Blitzkrieg is intelligible, perhaps pardonable, but that it should, to all intents and purposes, have ceased in London since the beginning of the war is neither. Consider for a moment the effects of its abandonment upon the children who have been evacuated and are now trying to continue their education in the country. It is impossible to give even a bird's-eye view of the picture in the Reception areas. It varies from month to month and from place to place, but from all the enquiries that I have made one fact of outstanding importance emerges, the disastrous effects of the interruption of education. Here, for example, is a small West country village with some 80 evacuees; two of them have been billeted for six months in the house at which I am staying. The girl, aged 8, takes her knitting to school every morning. "Do you do knitting every day?" we ask. "Yes," she says, "and sometimes I do it all day." "What, don't you do any lessons?" "No," she said, "often I don't do any lessons at all." A little startled, we interviewed the headmaster and as tactfully as possible put to him the full enormity of what the girl had told us. Was she telling the truth? Substantially, he answered, she was; and with that he launched out into an account of his difficulties. He personally had some 40 children to teach; they came from 15 different schools, 13 in London, one at Eastbourne and one at Hastings; they were of all ages from 7 to 14; new ones were constantly arriving. For two months they had had no books. All these things were bad, but they were not the worst. The worst was the fact that, almost without exception, the London children had done no work for months before their arrival in the summer. Some had been away from school since the war started; others since the new year; others only since the invasion of Holland. During the interlude they had forgotten most of what they already knew. Many had forgotten how to read. "We have," he said, "to start them practically from scratch. Obviously I cannot deal with them all, and if the girl you spoke of can already read, well, it is quite possible that she is left to knit most of the time."

Admittedly things are bad, but need they be quite so bad as this? Admittedly, war destroys the margins of life, but is education really on the margin? Is it not among the essentials of civilised life? And if this war is, as we say it is, a war for civilisation, ought we not to make a more determined effort to keep education going? Or, again, if we are fighting for a better world in the future, ought we not to prepare for the task that will confront them, the citizens who will have the making of that future? At present, education is the Cinderella of the war; when the pinch comes, it is the first to suffer. We are engaged in a tremendous drive to keep the war going, a drive which enables us to confront and overcome obstacles, to adapt institutions, to endure hardships, to make sacrifices, to cut through red tape; but there is no parallel drive to keep education going. If there were, we should do one or both of two things. We should commandeer all country houses which can be adapted for schools, compulsorily evacuate children complete with teachers, and turn the houses into little self-governing educational colonies for the duration of the war; and if there were not enough country houses to go round, we should build camps on the lines of the holiday camps that sprang up all over the country before the war, for the specific purpose of housing and educating our children for the duration. Of course it would cost money; but I doubt if the total expenditure would amount to the £10 million which is being consumed on every single day of the war.

C. E. M. JOAD

ON BLADES

THERE was a rush to buy razor-blades last week, a chemist told me, after the announcement that the production of these necessaries of the civilised life was to be cut down to 25 per cent. of what it is normally. Young men and old saw the years stretching before them with ever diminishing chances of getting that clean feeling in the morning that comes only with a good shave. Hence they hurried to buy enough of the precious metal to ensure self-respect for at least a month or two. I doubt whether even a bath is so essential to the sense of cleanliness as a shave. After a perfect shave, a man feels not only physically but morally cleansed. His character seems to improve with every patch of beard he removes. With a bare face he can face the world without flinching. Unshaven, he would creep apologetically through the streets, conscious that he was an object of the contempt of passers-by, and deservedly so. Paradoxically, the more stubble there was on his chin, the more naked he would feel in the presence of employers and waitresses. Let him turn into a barber's shop, however, and, after a few flashes of the razor his manhood will be restored. Shaving is one of the things that make for equality.

How passionately man throughout the centuries longed to get rid of his beard we may guess from the fact that the early razor, compared with ours, was all but a blunt instrument. In the Stone Age, no doubt, man must have tugged at the hair on his face with a flint arrow-head, groaning in spirit as he saw how sparse were the results of his pains. Even in the time of the Greeks and the Romans it is hard to believe that men possessed a sharp enough instrument to make the morning shave a pleasure. I feel sure that Caesar and Cicero went about with bristles on their chins and that never did they experience that baby-face innocence of jowl when after a good shave not a hair remains. I always think of them as men who shaved with something like a table-knife, leaving the best part of the crop behind. Still, they persisted, bequeathing to the world an ideal that seemed finally to have triumphed in our own time.

Look round the world to-day, and you will see that—is it for the first time in history?—it does not contain a single bearded leader of importance. Mr. Churchill, Mr. Roosevelt, Mussolini, Stalin, Hitler—they all use the razor. Stalin and Hitler still maintain a link with the pre-civilised tradition by wearing moustaches; but the fact remains that our age is essentially an age of shavers. Possibly, shaving was as general in the eighteenth century; but did any other century so fully anticipate our own in this matter?

Why the nineteenth century went back to beards is a question to which I do not know the answer. Some people say that the beard came into its own again only after the Crimean War during which there was little opportunity of shaving for soldiers. But whiskers were in fashion long before that: George Osborne wore them in the age of Waterloo. And whiskers are the half-way house to beardedness. By the middle of the century beardedness was certainly as popular among the great and good as in an earlier age it had been among the Hebrew patriarchs. It was impossible in those days to be a poet without a beard. Without a beard a poet would have had no message or would have looked as if he had none. It was difficult for a writer who had no beard to get himself taken seriously. It was difficult for a writer without a beard even to take himself seriously. If Oscar Wilde had not taken to shaving in the eighties he might have given the world more than a masterpiece of frivolity. But he fitted badly into an age in which every churchwarden and Presbyterian elder wore a beard or whiskers of some kind or other.

That is the world into which I was born—a world of abounding beards and whiskers. I had many grown up male relations, but I cannot remember more than one of them who was clean-shaven. My father wore whiskers until late in life; my grandfather wore whiskers, afterwards a beard; my Uncle William wore a beard; my Uncle Robert wore a beard; my Uncle David wore whiskers; my Uncle Hugh wore a beard; my second Uncle Willie wore a beard; my Uncle Joseph wore a beard; my second Uncle Joseph wore whiskers; and my Uncle James wore whiskers. I may have forgotten a few uncles, but, if I have, you may take it from me that these, too, were facially hirsute.

Some people might impute this Victorian love of hairiness to laziness; and certainly the Victorians were more easy-going in many ways than we who live in an age of labour-saving devices. But I do not think that it was through indolence that they shrank from shaving. For one thing, it must take even longer to wash a beard satisfactorily than to shave. In the second place, many of the Victorians half-shaved, and, in doing so, submitted themselves to the double labour of shaving and of washing hairy faces. It seems to me to be a more likely explanation that a race of prophets instinctively takes to beards. It has always been so since the days of Moses. It may not be entirely an accident that Mr. Shaw, the last of the Victorian prophets, is bearded. His beard may have been as inevitable as the procession of the equinoxes, whatever the procession of the equinoxes may be.

Why, however, did we, the children of the Victorians, suddenly cease to grow beards and even begin to think them funny? Was it merely the result of a change of fashion, or was it the result of a change of spirit? Had the prophetic genius become exhausted in us, and were we longing to settle down and enjoy the rich civilisation our fathers had bequeathed to us? For a time we compromised with moustaches and became a generation of half-prophets—Stevenson preaching his gospel of the duty of happiness and Kipling preaching his gospel of the white man's burden—and many brilliant writers continue to wear moustaches to-day. But, on the whole, the clean shave has triumphed. Its victory was sealed by the popularity of the foolish game of Beaver some years ago, when beards became a laughing-stock in the streets, like Elisha's baldness.

This being so, is it reasonable for a government headed by a clean-shaven man to withhold from us the means of shaving? If the authorities regard shaving as a luxurious vice, why do they compel the soldiers to shave and, indeed, make it a punishable offence not to shave up to a decent standard? There is probably a need for more rather than fewer razor-blades just now, when the younger male population is being swept into the Army. For the soldier, apparently, has usually to shave with cold water, and this is more severe on razor-blades. I met a young soldier the other day who complained of the drawbacks of cold-water shaving. "Before I joined the Army," he said, "I used to be able to get along on two shaves a week. But, with this cold water, I have to shave every day." Obviously, this is no time to cut down the supply of razor-blades.

There is also the question whether razor-blades last as long to-day as they used to do. I myself find that I can get two perfect shaves from a blade, one that is fairly good, and a fourth that is just passable. Yet I see that a writer, who has probably had as much experience as I have, speaks of "a man with a growth of average toughness who with care could make one blade last a fortnight." For myself I admit that I have never used razor-blades with care: what are safety-razors for except to enable us to use blades carelessly? If I were a careful shaver I should never have given up the old-fashioned cut-throat razor. I should never have given up, indeed, if I had been any good at stropping it. The safety-razor appealed to me merely as a labour-saving machine which justified me in scrapping an old blade as recklessly as an American scraps an old motor car.

Yet here comes an authority on the subject who tells me that, after using a blade, I should sharpen it on the palm of my hand, or on the inside of a glass tumbler. I cannot believe that, having failed to sharpen a razor on a strop, I should be any more successful in sharpening a blade on a glass tumbler or on the palm of my hand. Besides, I have work to do. Then there is the advice to use one blade for each day in the week. That, too, requires careful planning which cuts fatally into the working day. I cannot see myself toiling and moiling in this fashion even in order to make a blade last two months, as we are told we shall soon all have to do. If shaving begins to present so many difficulties as this, indeed, I shall be tempted to revert to the habits of Abraham and Isaac. In other words, if the razor-blade shortage becomes acute, I will grow a beard and become a Victorian.

Y. Y.

DEATH OF AN ACTRESS

I see from the paper that Florrie Forde is dead—
Collapsed after singing to wounded soldiers,
At the age of sixty-five. The American notice
Says no doubt all that need be said

About this one-time chorus girl; whose role
For more than forty stifling years was giving
Sexual, sentimental, or comic entertainment,
A gaudy posy for the popular soul.

Plush and cigars: she waddled into the lights,
Old and huge and painted, in velvet and tiara,
Her voice gone but around her head an aura
Of all her vanilla-sweet forgotten vaudeville nights.

With an elephantine shimmy and a sugared wink
She threw a trellis of Dorothy Perkins roses
Around an audience come from slum and suburb
And weary of the tea-leaves in the sink;

Who found her songs a rainbow leading west
To the home they never had, to the chocolate Sunday
Of boy and girl, to cowslip time, to the never-
Ending week-end Islands of the Blest.

In the Isle of Man before the war before
The present one she made a ragtime favourite
Of "Tipperary," which became the swan-song
Of troop-ships on a darkened shore;

And during Munich sang her ancient quiz
Of "Where's Bill Bailey?" and the chorus answered,
Muddling through and glad to have no answer:
Where's Bill Bailey? How do *we* know where he is!

Now on a late and gangrened April day
In a military hospital Miss Florrie
Forde has made her positively last appearance
And taken her bow and gone correctly away.

Correctly. For she stood
For an older England, for children toddling
Hand in hand while the day was bright. Let the wren and robin
Gently with leaves cover the Babes in the Wood.

May, 1940 Louis MacNeice

HAPPY CHRISTMAS FOR SMITH

The Lion walked through the cold fields all tussocky with frozen mangolds.

He disliked the Second Great War because of the lack of circuses and stale bread (which he favoured soaked in rich gravy).

Stale bread was now being saved for swill, and circus business was killed by the black-out. So it was difficult for Smith (that was the lion's name) to practise as a national emblem; and he was driven mad by his conscience because he was not "doing his bit."

It was therefore with a noble melancholy that he traversed the crisp uncomfortable field and padded through the hedge into Lark Lane. Miss Fond, on her bicycle, nearly collided with him.

"Help! help! Tigers!" she cried as she dismounted.

"Pardon me, madam, but you exaggerate. A *lion*!"

"Lions! Oh help!"

"One lion, madam, at your service," said Smith; and as an afterthought to put her more at her ease, added, "and the compliments of the season to you, m'am. These are hard times; but Christmas comes but once a year and. . . ."

Miss Fond sniffed "I don't believe it. I must have had an accident."

"I must say I thought you braked rather hard."

"I don't believe it," repeated Miss Fond. "I'm sure I have eaten nothing, nor . . ."

"Nor have I," said Smith; and his eye, chancing to catch hers at that moment, set her off again crying "Help! help!" and making passes behind her bicycle.

"I am hoping to come across a Christmas dinner," Smith said simply.

Miss Fond, with weak, ungainly haste, leapt back into her saddle and began pedalling like mad. "I still don't believe it," she grunted. "Not a lion! I wonder if I am dead?"

Trotting alongside, Smith remarked: "You seem very sprightly to me; though, if you swerve about on these frosty roads . . ."

"I don't"—snapped Miss Fond—"as a rule."

"I know someone who snapped," growled the lion rather irritably, "and swallowed more than she meant to." Miss Fond looked sideways at his noble jaws and pedalled herself almost to death. "Alive or dead, I shall soon be at the lodge gates," she panted.

"A Lodge, eh!" said Smith. "With a fine mansion in a park? Nothing would suit me better this Christmas. A place where there is still dignity and repose!"

He frisked with eager anticipation about the speedy but reluctant figure upon the bicycle, causing her to ring her bell ceaselessly to express her alarm.

"You will only make an ass of yourself if you keep doing that," Smith warned her, as they came to the last lap within sight of the gates. "And I do not consider it very complimentary to me."

"His Lordship will pay you all the compliments you deserve," said Miss Fond, through her teeth, and encouraged no doubt by the nearness of home.

"And who, may I ask, is his Lordship?"

"Lord Trellis, of course. . ." But Miss Fond now observed that the gates were shut. To dismount in the presence of a lion was out of the question. To show alarm by circling outside and crying out was to invite ridicule. Her position as housekeeper at Trellis Hall demanded dignity and an unabated imperiousness.

"That would be Trellis, the big game hunter?"

But Miss Fond saved her breath for a new outcry. "Gate! gate!" she cried. "Open the gates at once."

Mrs. Pleag, her tried enemy these many years, waddled with provocative leisureliness from her lodge.

"Who said *gate*?" said she, knowing very well.

Miss Fond, in a sweat of helpless bitterness, was forced to circle once. "Don't argue, Mrs. Pleag, in the name of God."

Mrs. Pleag stood squarely before the bars like an old-fashioned regiment of the line preparing against an assault.

"I would have you know, *Mrs. Housekeeper Fond* . . ." she began, "that flunkeys, like yourself, there may be up at the Hall. . ."

No more words came from her wide-opened mouth, for it was less than a yard away from that of the lion. She threw her whole bulk against the gate, and her enemy, Miss Fond, plush-faced, with embarrassed energy, swung through, the lion trotting beside.

Lacking imagination as she did, Mrs. Pleag decided afterwards, over a strong cup of tea, that the whole thing had been a trick of the light, and that she would say nothing about it to her husband, who, being gamekeeper, would know of any lions—if there were any.

I do not know whether the lion or Miss Fond was the more embarrassed as they approached Trellis Hall.

"A dearth of bread and circuses can lead one into curiously undignified situations," said Smith, by way of making conversation. "But no doubt his Lordship is accustomed to keeping a good old-fashioned open house at Christmas."

"Not with rationing," answered the housekeeper, with automatic and sour authority.

"Oh! rationing hardly worries me at all," murmured Smith, noting with some pleasure the alarm this caused to the bicyclist.

Lord Trellis then observed them with his binoculars from the terrace; and he slapped his great haunches and laughed, and cried, "Serve her right, the sour old puss; serve her right."

He was armed only with a 410, which he used for odd potting from the house; and he decided to hold his fire in order to enjoy the pursuit of his housekeeper by the lion, which was a rare novelty, most welcome in the festive season.

"Your Lordship! Your Lordship!"

"What is it, Miss Fond?"

"It's a terrible lion, which has been following me for miles. It keeps snapping, and I'm sure it would have eaten me if I hadn't warded it off. Please shoot it, my lord, before I get off this bicycle. I have already been through so much."

Lord Trellis stroked his great fibrous whiskers, and mourned the fact that the 410 would not be very effective against the tawny bulk of Smith.

Miss Fond never ceased complaining as she circled in the drive; nor did she mention any part of the conversation she had had with the lion.

Lord Trellis, kept very short by her mean housekeeping, suffering from loneliness because he was such a bore about big game hunting, and feeling very obsolete in the midst of the Second Great War which had not so much as dropped an incendiary in his park, caught the lion's eye, as he rose to hasten to the gun-room.

Smith winked.

Lord Trellis winked back; and seeing that he hesitated about going to the gun-room, Smith remarked: "The compliments of the season, Lord Trellis. I know I'm intruding, but . . ."

"Don't believe him, my lord," shrilled Miss Fond. "It isn't true. Lions don't talk."

"They get very hungry, though, after running along cold country roads," said Smith, giving her a look full of meaning.

This made poor Miss Fond circulate all the faster and Lord Trellis to sizzle and boom with laughter.

"Compliments of the season to you, my dear fellow. Come inside and . . ."

"Lord Trellis. I beg you! In fact, I warn you! If that lion enters Trellis Hall, I shall give notice. For years and years I've worked . . ."

But Lord Trellis bellowed and smote himself and boomed back at her. "Be so good as to ride round to the back door and leave the lion to me."

"A very good suggestion, if I may say so, my lord," said Smith. "As a National Emblem I had hoped to be asked everywhere this Christmas, but I find myself quite on my own resources and . . ."

"Come inside. Come inside. There's the gun-room; there's all my trophies . . ."

That began a very strange Christmas at Trellis Hall.

Miss Fond, who had no intention of leaving whenever she gave notice, because it was much more spiteful to stay on, dismounted her bicycle at the back door, and pranced vengefully into the house.

"His Lordship has got a lion in with him," she barked at Mr. Cod, the butler.

Mr. Cod's eyebrows went up and he smiled indulgently, for he had always nursed a suspicion that Miss Fond took a glass of something very strong on the quiet; and he would not, it must be admitted, have been averse to joining her.

"And the cow jumped over the moon," he said. "His Lordship has just ordered tea and bread and butter for six; and he says, to ask you where is the usual Christmas cake."

Now Lord Trellis rarely enjoyed himself, Miss Fond saw to that. He revelled in the company of Smith.

They had tea for six. They took down all the dusty trophies. They recalled native war songs and dances. They imitated the cries of animals. They fired shot after shot from the gun-room and lavatory windows. They ate enormously, and fetched up the best port. They made Cod think he was back in the Navy, sent him hollering *avast*, swearing, and skidding in a wild hornpipe throughout the house.

The presence of the lion filled Lord Trellis with defiance. He stamped his feet at Miss Fond and fired revolver shots over her head.

But the presence of the lion—and the looks he gave her—terrified her most.

Never being one who could let well alone, she telephoned the police and said: "This is the housekeeper at Trellis Hall. His Lordship is with a lion in the dining-room."

"You mean he is injured?"

"No, he is just talking."

"*Talking!*" Rich marrowfat police laughter.

She telephoned Dr. Luff, the A.R.P., and the Clerk to the Rural District Council. None of them cared for Miss Fond in any case; and, being convivial, they just laughed.

On Christmas afternoon, she cycled down to the lodge, and that was her last extremity.

"Now Mrs. Pleag, you saw me with a lion when I came back on my bicycle."

Mrs. Pleag glanced at her husband, saw him tap his temple and then she said: "A lion, Miss Fond! Whatever next!"

Miss Fond, bleached with fury, cycled away, and made arrangements for Christmas dinner for eight with exceptional quantities of stale bread.

Smith complimented her upon it. Lord Trellis, who had told him every big game story he knew, said that it did her credit and that he would take her on his next safari. Cod sang a song called "Every Nice Girl Loves a Sailor," and offered her his hand in marriage.

To everyone's surprise, she accepted this; and it therefore fell to Cod's lot to explain to the police, Dr. Luff, the A.R.P., the Clerk to the Rural District Council, and the Pleags what she had been driving at, which was an almost impossible task, as Smith had gone back to work early next morning.

And lions look so much alike that it is impossible, too, to trace him and get his confirmation of these events—even if he is willing to give it.

JOHN PUDNEY

THE LOST SAILOR

HE came to them suddenly, lurching out of darkness, stumbled, then fell, sprawled at their feet, and he lay still there as though transfixed by the abnormally bright light above his head. Nine o'clock was striking and the general exodus towards the lounge ceased, and people stood about watching the man on the floor. From the open door of the lounge a cultivated voice was announcing the news, copyright no longer reserved. A man stepped out from a group of whisperers and bending down spoke to the still figure on the floor. Was he ill? What was wrong? "Nothing wrong with me," the man said, truculently, staring at the other. Another man immediately joined him, said, "let's help him up. A faint, I think."

Nearby a reverend gentleman tightened his grip on his wife's arm, his eyes said to everybody, "drunk," and then with fingers against his lips, his teeth were loosened after a heavy dinner, he spoke to her. "Come dear, the news is on."

They passed into the lounge, she erect, prim, he hovering over her primness.

"A drunken sailor, dear," he said, the door closing behind them as if by magic.

Suddenly the sailor sat up and looked about him, blinked, cried out, "Where's the bloody manager of this place, anyhow?" People looked away then, whispered to each other, made inquiries about things not very important, wondered who the man was, asked where the proprietress could be. Meanwhile a voice spoke to them from the lounge, one word soared above others, ears drank it in, "bombs."

"Here she is now," someone said, as a short thin lady in a skin tight dress and a severe expression on her face appeared round the corner. She stopped dead, and looked at the man on the floor. He was still in a sitting position, still staring, everything was strange to him, but he did not know that he himself was far more strange to them. A phenomenon, unique, something out of the darkness, the darkness that no longer mattered to the people who had come crowding into "The Bullet and Duck" during the past few days, and so fast that Miss Trench the proprietress hardly had time to sit down and congratulate herself on her good fortune. All had travelled by the same road. Fear. Only a month previous Miss Trench had wondered if the Council might give her another month's grace over the rates. That was now forgotten. It was like something slightly distressing and uncomfortable, the same something that smug Midlanders had left behind them when they got out their cars and rushed headlong for the best rooms left in "The Bullet and Duck." Alton, once lost, had returned again. It was on the map. And as she watched the two men trying to stand the sailor up these thoughts rushed through her mind like a fast film. What did he want? Slightly suspicious, hesitant, she at length went forward and stood near him. At the same time the lounge door opened and the voice inside swelled out into the corridor, and one or two people, bored by news, came out, sat down in chairs, watched. Miss Trench spoke quickly, sharply. "Well," she said. "What is it you want?" her tone belligerent, she didn't trust anything in a blue serge suit, and even though the linen collar showed dignity, it was yet covered with mud and there were some blood-stains on the sailor's chin. Looking lower she realised something else. "Who is he?" not looking at the sailor, but directly at the two gentlemen who were still trying to keep the man upright. "No gentleman," she reflected, gentlemen never *were* tattooed. It was the design on his right hand that unnerved her, increased her fear, strengthened her belligerency, fortified her resolution.

"What is it?" she said, quickly, more sharply, a little afraid, eyes watching her, feeling them on her person.

"I want a room," the sailor said, lurched dangerously, hiccoughed, rolled his eyes. "Want a room," he said.

"Sorry," Miss Trench said, "we're full." The sailor muttered something, for a moment the reverend gentleman who had reappeared thought it was a curse, though he would have expected that. He was watching Miss Trench, interested in her reactions. "Sorry," Miss Trench said again, "we're full," her eyes searching for the human cipher in uniform, her voice afraid to call, "Jones." She prayed Jones would come. The man was dead drunk. Disgraceful. And looking at others she read it in their eyes, "disgraceful."

"I'm very sorry, but you can't stay here," Miss Trench said. She drew back a pace, thinking the man might lunge out at her. His red face was frightening, an unhealthy face, too much blood in it, her mind spelt "danger."

"God," the sailor said. "I got money. I just come back from a long voyage. Beef boat," he said. "I got money. I want a room."

"Can't you explain," Miss Trench said, now appealing to the two men who were holding him, wishing they would move off as one body towards the door. And suddenly Miss Trench cried, "Jones."

"Jones's night off, mum," a maid said, passing quickly with a water-bottle in her hand, a wraith in dark grey.

Miss Trench went right up to the sailor now. "Don't you understand?" "Understand what?" he shouted in her face. "I got money to pay for a room," fumbling clumsily in his pocket, dragging out a wallet crammed with notes.

"But we're full up," she said.

"I don't care where I sleep," he said, "so long's it's a bed. I'll pay." A gentleman, waved hair oiled down, white hands making gestures, came forward.

"I'm sure Miss Trench would fix you up if it was humanly possible," drawing back a little, he had come too near, the sailor's breath smelt strongly of drink.

"Who the hell are you?"

Miss Trench looked round. Perhaps by a miracle a policeman might appear. The voice in the lounge droned on, something about courage, going to it, backbone.

"You won't give me a room, that's it," the sailor said. "You're all the same. The bloody lot of you. I've been to three places now. All saying the same things like they was trained to it. I'll *pay* I tell you." Miss Trench's mind cried, "Danger, get him out, nuisance, where is Jones, confound Jones."

Suddenly the reverend gentleman came across, spoke to Miss Trench.

"I would willingly give him my room if you could find a place for my wife," he said, his mind seeing long dark lanes of water through which the sailor had passed.

"Nonsense. Impossible, Mr. Penge. I'm sure there are plenty of other places, *really*."

The two men had managed to get the sailor on to a form, seating themselves beside him. They consoled, listened, answered questions.

"But God Almighty, you'd think I was asking for the moon," the sailor shouted.

"Ssh!"

"I won't shush at all," he shouted. "Why can't I have a room anyhow? I haven't seen a bloody bed for months."

"Look here, I'll tell you what," the younger of the two men said, "come and have a drink," putting a hand under his arm.

"I want a room, that's all I want. A bloody room. I can pay for it," waving the wallet in the other's face.

Miss Trench talked in whispers with a maid who had just come up. The maid went away. Miss Trench went across to the sailor. "There's a camp bed in the cellar," she was saying, when to her surprise the sailor broke free of the two men and stood up. "I want a room," he said.

"But a maid is offering you one," she said.

"Come on," the younger man said, "time for a drink, come on."

"Let go of me," the sailor shouted, "it isn't time for a drink. It's time to go. I know. Needn't think I don't. Just take one good look at the bloody lot of you and I know what to do."

Miss Trench said finally, "That's all we can do, I'm afraid."

"Then don't you do it, Mrs., don't you put yourself out for me. Oh no. You mustn't do that."

"Come now," the man said again, "come and have a drink. Time for a drink."

"Time to go. I know."

"How distressing," Mr. Penge's wife said, "poor fellow. Looks as though he had been fighting. Come Arthur, bed," with supreme authority. They went up the stairs.

"But I don't want a bloody room now," the sailor said, "you can keep it," glaring at Miss Trench, and turning fiercely to the younger man, "and I don't want your drink either. I know when it's time to go. Let go," and he tore free his arm, went lurching away towards the door.

Whispers broke out again, somebody talked confidingly to Miss Trench.

"Expect they'll lock him up, you know. Poor fellow. Been fighting."

"Well, there it is," Miss Trench said, "Beatrice offered him her bed in the cellar, really all we had. I wish Jones had been here," she stood rigid as though suddenly frozen by a fresh horror, "and do *shut that door*, Beatrice."

"I am, mum."

The sailor was half in, half out of the hotel, shouting out at the top of his voice, "I know when it's time to go all right. I'm not drunk. Could've paid for a room, just like these others. Pity a bloody bomb didn't drop on the lot of you," and the door banged.

"Gone, mum," Beatrice said.

"Thank you, Beatrice, bolt it please," and Miss Trench went off down the corridor, ladies and gentlemen scattered, and Beatrice said: "Phew!" all the way to her bed in the cellar. "What a caution," she said, "what a caution these sailors are." JAMES HANLEY

CONVERSATION LESSON

(OR PEACE-TIME CHRISTMAS, WITH A HUGO).

WHEN did you arrive in London, Sir? Welcome to the metropolis.

Yesterday; it has been raining since.

How annoying! So it has been raining in your part of London, too. We have had hail and sleet. It was very inspiriting (lamentable) to see the people running for doorways and being splashed by the buses. Will you come home with me?

Certainly, I enjoy visits. How do we go?

We catch a bus, then the Tube, and then a tram. It is convenient. Here we are.

Is this your house, with the tiled path and the monkey-puzzle, called Mon Repos? There is your dog; what is his name?

He is not my dog, but my neighbour's. He is very fierce. We shall have to go in by the back way. Ah, I should have remembered to tell you not to bump your head! Mary, bring iodine, arnica, cottonwool, styptic and bandages.

It is a mere trifle; I have not lost much blood. So this is your daughter. How do you do?

No, it is my wife. These are my children, breaking their toys. Willy, take your fingers out of your nose; Doris, do not squint so; Alfred, cease biting the gentleman's hand. It is not lunch-time yet. You will stay to lunch?

Delighted. What charming children!

My wife will cook* lunch herself. Ah, the turkey is singed, there are eyes in the potatoes, the cabbage tastes of paraffin, and we have nothing but port wine in the house! Will you stay to tea?

Thank you. How dark the sky has become, it is snowing. That dog is eating the chrysanthemums.

I will throw stones at him. Ah, one has gone through the glass of the greenhouse. The dog has found my roses. The snow is five inches deep. We shall not be able to have tea in the garden.

No matter. I see you have a palm-tree in the sitting-room, velvet curtains, a tiger rug, bull-rushes on the mantelpiece, and pictures by Holman Hunt and Lord Leighton. It looks very homely and comfortable.

Yes, and on wet days we read old copies of *Punch* and play clumps or the pianola. The Spring Song we like very much. Shall I play it again?

Do, I could not hear it too often. What is that noise?

Doris has stuck a knitting needle into Willy, who has ended by pushing her downstairs. It is nothing. The noise was made by the hat-stand falling in the hall. At the same time Alfred, it seems, has fallen into the copper; he is always doing it, he is growing up fast. Even the little rosebuds have their thorns. You will stay to supper?

That is very good of you. When do we sit down?

Here we are, cold turkey, and cold potatoes, and cold cabbage. And a cup of cocoa to warm us. Ah, Willy has upset the cocoa!

And Doris is sprinkling pepper in the sugar, and little Alfred has fallen asleep in his chair. Happy children.

They have grown up freely. I think it wrong to force them, though, naturally, discipline must be maintained. Ah, I see the snow has turned to drizzle, there is now an impenetrable fog! Good night. I hope you will come again, and stay a little longer.

Thank you. I will come to-morrow and bring my trunks. Your home-life is irresistible. I shall make myself at home, I trust, though a stranger in the midst.† Many happy returns of the night. Good-bye and God-damn. So long. So so. Keep both ends burning. Chin up. Toes on the line. Tootleoo. G. W. STONIER

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* Compare, "cook the accounts."

† Quotation; very good, but from whom?

PLAYS AND PICTURES

Secrets of Nature

It is twenty-one years since the first of the famous *Secrets of Nature* films was made. Twenty-one years of uninterrupted issue of these short films which, first as the *Secrets of Nature* and now as the *Secrets of Life*, have delighted as well as instructed audiences in many lands, is a record of which Bruce Woolfe and his associates have a right to be proud. The British film trade should be proud, too. They have earned a reputation for craftsmanship and honesty of purpose brought about by the wise spending of a few pounds, which may well be envied by producers of big entertainment films with lavish funds at their disposal. Consistent production has not been achieved without a struggle. Always there have been problems of securing distribution for the films. Wardour Street has never been persuaded that the public would accept films about the nightingale, the wood-wasp, the trout or the frog without facetious presentation. At first it had to be in the printed captions; nowadays it is in the wise-cracking commentary. Neither Bruce Woolfe nor his helpers should be blamed for this illiterate attitude to their subjects. The films—over three hundred have been made—have been the product of a group. Although Bruce Woolfe's courage and perseverance have kept the Series going, many technicians and experts have contributed to their success. Mr. Woolfe himself would be the first to acknowledge the skill of such Nature photographers as Charles Head, Oliver Pike and Walter Higham. From Mr. Percy Smith's Heath Robinson-like little studio at Southgate have come hundreds of thousands of feet of film of amazing and beautiful plant and insect photography. Frank Bundy, Jack Parker and Frank Goodliffe have each in their time done Zoo films or pictures of marine life for the Series. Professor Huxley has advised on subjects and commentaries. Last, but of major importance, has been the work of Miss Mary Field in selecting and editing the films from the material supplied her, and from time to time directing a film herself. Theirs has been a real group effort. Their charm and information have been carried outside Britain. As far apart as New York and Nairobi one has heard their fascination appreciated. It is thus with regret that we learn that this specialist group, which for twenty-one years has made famous the *Secrets of Nature*, is not now working in the sphere of film-making which it has made especially its own. Not much imagination is needed to suggest the kind of films which Mr. Bruce Woolfe and his group should be making if their particular skill is to be used in the spread of information as part of the national effort.

"The Thief of Bagdad," at the Odeon
"Strike Up the Band," at the Empire

These are the "Christmas specials." *The Thief of Bagdad* sets out to go one or two better than *Chu Chin Chow*, and on that level romps home. Did a famous camel once walk on to the stage of His Majesty's? Here are flying horses as well as elephants in pink silk and giant spiders in temples. Oscar Asche? Conrad Veidt is ten times more impressive as the vizier who overthrows monarchs and compels women with his eyes. June Duprez is a spectacular Eastern lovely, and John Justin has to go through most of two hours under a spell of blindness in search of her. The slippery little thief who climbs palaces and finds a djinn to take him to the highest temple in the world, is Sabu, and he has a song "I want to be a sailor boy," that outdoes in simple tunelessness even "I am Chu Chin Chow of China." The whole thing is in Technicolor, but colour that has begun to discover subtleties in artificial gardens or a dress of white edged with pale gold, and what more could one want? Well, a little less conjuring and a little more magic. *The Thief of Bagdad* could have dispensed with some of its air travel (on backs of horses, djinns and flying carpets) and aimed instead at discovering the springy surprise of an Eastern tale. Korda's fantasy is muscle-bound; the wonder is that with so many years and directors and co-directors gone to its making, it is so good.

Before going to see and hear *Strike Up the Band*, ask yourself three questions: (*a*) Do you like Mickey Rooney? (*b*) Do you like swing? (*c*) Do you like Paul Whiteman? Two Yeses mean you will enjoy the film, which starts with high school swing and ends with four bands symphonising at full tilt. Judy Garland goes with the first part and tries to get Rooney to swing a love-affair; Mr. Whiteman, in the second, gives us a pi-jaw on the significance of jazz. "It brings out the best or the worst in people," he says to his goggle-eyed listener. It brings out the bore, too.

THE COMING WEEK

Friday, December 27th—
Fabian Christmas School, Frensham Heights School, Rowledge, nr. Farnham. Till December 30th.

Sunday, December 29th—
"Jack the Giant Killer," Unity Theatre, 2.30. And every Saturday and Sunday.

Tuesday, December 31st—
The Le Play Society Annual Conference, Somerville College, Oxford. Speakers include Sir John E. Russell, Dr. Jan Masaryk, Prof. Gilbert Murray and Dr. Maxwell Garnett. Particulars from Muxton House, nr. Wellington, Shropshire.
Miss Amy Sayle: "Billeting War Workers," Housing Centre, 13 Suffolk Street, S.W.1, 1.

Correspondence

WAR AIMS

Sir,—It sounds depressing, but maybe our Government Press Service spokesman (Mr. J. H. Huizinga) in your issue of December 7th is right. Compared to their present Gestapo hell the old order of "freedom and independence" may seem to our people over in Holland a paradise to be regained unaltered.

Fortunately their sons in the Dutch Services on British soil and seas are better placed to keep their sense of proportion. The old order of things is regarded with mixed feelings. We remember such details as the freedom of our cattle to eat the tomatoes, debarred from export through high tariffs, and the unemployed farm labourer consequently given the democratic choice between reduced dole and hiring himself out to farms in Nazi Germany. This snapshot of the "old order" clearly reveals symptoms of the social disease which produced Hitler, the war and this letter.

Will our Government Press Service in common council with British and Allied Government Press Services kindly probe the feelings of their readers towards the past, in order to derive some constructive thoughts for the future. Ordinary Seaman

Royal Netherlands Navy.

Sir,—Your contention that the only way in which to defeat Hitler is to assist the revolutionary movement in Germany to overthrow him is undeniably sound. But assisting revolutionaries is a new and dangerous game for British imperialists to play, and it is doubtful if they will like the result.

For if the German people revolt against Hitler, what will happen? Undoubtedly, I think, the Red Army will march into Germany; and how shall we be able to stop them? They, being neutral, will have conserved their forces in preparation for precisely such a contingency; and they will enter the fray against a war-weary Britain. And we, presumably, shall have to pocket our pride and anti-Bolshevist prejudice and accept the situation as a *fait accompli*.

It will be a strange finish to a strange war. We backed Hitler to fight Stalin and destroy Communism. Hitler double-crossed us by entering into a non-aggression alliance with Moscow. Whereupon we had to fight Hitler ourselves. And when we do finally beat him (if Mr. Churchill dares to let us) the Red Army moves in, and the power of Communism, instead of being destroyed or even weakened, is enormously strengthened by the entry of Germany to the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics!

Did somebody mention pulling chestnuts out of the fire for somebody else? Douglas Day

506 Norwich Road,
Ipswich.

Sir,—I am the more grateful for Archibald Robertson's letter in your December 7th issue, in which he pleaded for recognition of the failure of the Versailles spirit, since the whole of Sir Robert Vansittart's overseas broadcast envisages a Super-Versailles as one of the Government's war aims. Let us be clear about this: the Chief Diplomatic Advisor to His Majesty's Government accepts "race theory" *in toto*, and sees the whole German people as "the brazen horde."

One can only cherish the hope that the Prime Minister, in his projected outlining of general war aims, will repudiate such race hatred in the most categorical terms. For what does this monstrous thing amount to when applied to our own people and our own past? That the Irish are to equate all of us with the Black and Tan mind? Or that the people of India are to believe we are all imperialists? Or are we? Eric Waters

Royal Masonic Senior School,
Bushey.

Sir,—In the issue of The New Statesman and Nation of December 14th, the author of your comments, in discussing the ideas of Sir Robert Vansittart, makes some highly critical allusions to "the war aims of the present Polish leaders."

If we were to take his view, it would appear that it was not really the Germans who stood between the world and a just and lasting peace, but the Poles and their deplorable mentality. How the author gained so intimate a knowledge of the "Polish leaders'" minds he does not disclose. In any case, he seems to be much more disturbed by the possible vindictiveness of the Poles than by the unprecedented record of brutality and cruelty characterising the German domination in Poland, and by the avowed design of her conquerors to murder the Polish nation or at least reduce it literally to servitude under German lordship.

Although possibly not realised by people whose accustomed outlook they disturb, these things are none the less an appalling reality and an undeniable feature of the present situation in Europe. German sway in Norway, in Belgium, in Holland is certainly harsh, it is cruel enough in Czechoslovakia, but in Poland it represents a deliberate and studied return to the darkest days of human history. Whoever wishes to learn more about the facts, can find ample opportunity in many quarters. One of the last *Times'* pamphlets contains the essential information.

But the author of the article finds a motive for indulgence towards the Germans in pointing out the sins of other nations. Other peoples have certainly not always lived up to their ideals, but it is undeniable that they possess and cherish such ideals. Unfortunately, these ideals, which are foremost among the motives of the present struggle, have always been astonishingly absent from the German mind. The acknowledged heroes of Germany in modern times, Frederick II, Bismarck, Hitler, have instilled into the spirit of their people a true cult of blood and iron. And nothing can be gained by concealing from the Germans that the British Commonwealth of Nations, with the downtrodden peoples of the Continent, are determined to found an order of things on lines distinctly opposed to their present aspirations.

This, of course, does not mean that it is wise to make threats against the German nation. But it is in no way wiser and even less generous to accuse their victims of evil intentions and point them out for public censure. As I happen to know a good deal about the way of thinking of the "Polish leaders," I can assure you that they are well aware of the distinction to be made between restitution and retribution.

Your writer confuses the two notions, and that is probably why he has another grievance against the "Polish leaders": presumably they would not welcome as a promising triumph of international justice if the Soviets remained in possession of the Eastern Provinces of Poland which they so dexterously seized. That those territories were "largely inhabited by Russians" has been a favourite assertion of Russian nationalists for a long time, although the simple truth is that Russians represent there less than 1 per cent. of the population. But strangely enough in this instance, "nationalistic folly" and "childish racialism" in no way ruffles the writer's serenity.

The grim earnestness of these times certainly demands that passions should be curbed, and violent, even if excusable, sentiments mastered. But wishful thinking on the subject of German liberalism, love of peace and political good will is in a great measure responsible for the present catastrophe and cannot be indulged in after victory without new and terrible risk.

Polish Research Centre, Jan Balinski Jundzill
32 Chesham Place,
London, S.W.1.

[This letter precisely illustrates our point. (1) Modern history records no more horrible story than the Nazi treatment of the Poles. (2) The natural Polish reaction is a demand for revenge, and the Polish war aims so far discussed suggest that after the war the Poles will demand an enlarged Poland with many Germans and Russians under their rule. Amongst other objections to such proposals is that their achievement would seem to involve a war with the U.S.S.R. (3) We agree that the number of "Great Russians" in the territories annexed by the Soviet Union was negligible. But the immense majority of the population, whether Ukrainian or White Russian peasants or Jewish townsmen, had suffered much under the Polish landed class, and may on the whole be a gainer by the change. (4) Such phrases as "indulgence towards the Germans" discourage all serious political thinking. There should be neither "indulgence" nor "retribution" in the post-war settlement. If Europe is ever again to be fit to live in, common people in Poland and Germany will have to learn to live together, and we believe that if there is a common economy and an international order they will be able to do so. But that means having no great Polish and German landlords and no nationalist politicians.—Ed., *N.S. & N.*]

LEFT TURNINGS

Sir,—Mr. R. Palme Dutt's letter in your edition of December 14th has that blend of malice and misrepresentation that we have come to expect from his particular minority. No doubt embittered or perhaps simply unbalanced by the remarkable about-turns which Communists have felt obliged to perform since the war began, the sole thread of consistency detectable in their expressed views seems to be their antipathy to union, loyalty, and co-operation between the various classes, whose internecine struggle they would fain provoke.

If they succeeded, as Mr. Gollancz has said, they would present Nazi Germany with another and final victory.

Like the rest of his lamentable partisans, Mr. Dutt affects to deny this. From the remoteness of his contact with the fighting of this war he presumes to inform us that it is highly doubtful if there ever was a real danger of invasion in the autumn. He favours the view that no intelligent German General Staff would so "oblige the British strategists." To him, apparently, the British strategists are if anything more odious than the Germans. They are the tool of the British imperialist rulers. Venom pervades his very mention of them.

He cares nothing for observed facts. He cannot afford to. But here are one or two. During those autumn months hundreds of air crews in the R.A.F. flew over the Channel ports of France. They bombed them and they photographed them, and their photographs preserve what they remember. The ports were crammed with vessels, loaded with supplies, and the whole coastal area teemed with troops in preparation. Bluff, was it? Bluff with what object, then? To "deceive the Left" so that their alleged opposition to the war should give place to unity and resolution? To reinforce the plans of their enemies, "the British imperialist rulers," for the exploitation of an invasion scare which was really only a "fantastic hypothesis"?

That seems a curious policy for the "intelligent German General Staff," those "by no means incompetent strategists of German imperialism," to have adopted.

And it was an expensive one, too. As bluff it showed a devastatingly poor return, for thanks to the determined attacks of the R.A.F. and the Navy, so much of the mighty panoply of invasion gathered there was destroyed that the remainder was for the time being dispersed.

If Mr. Dutt had been flying there then, he would have seen it too. But of course he was not. Some of us were: we, too, have our hopes and ideals for this country. After the war, if we are still alive, perhaps we can see our struggle for them bear fruit.

But the principles of class warfare, hatred, and suspicion, so dear to this particular type of Communist, will be even further from them than he was from the Channel ports while the Germans made ready. Flying Officer,
R.A.F.V.R

OLD AGE PENSIONS

Sir,—Your contributor, *Paras*, does some wrong (though in a good cause) to the professional economists, in attributing to them hostility to a generous old age pension scheme. The type of economist whom he satirises is nowadays a rare and a silent bird.

It is not necessary to *Paras*' case to argue that pensions would increase productivity by putting the workers in better heart. Even if the total product were the same (indeed, even if it declined) it would still be desirable to redistribute it more in accordance with needs. But schemes such as pensions and family allowances are calculated (in peace time) to increase the total product simply because they keep up the level of consumption and so reduce unemployment. Latter-day economists are much concerned with these matters, and *Paras* would find amongst them many more supporters than opponents. Joan Robinson
Cambridge.

RHODESIAN CONFLICT

Sir,—Miss Rita Hinden's article entitled "Rhodesian Conflict" contains mis-statements, half-truths and innuendos, at least some of which ought to be refuted.

"In Southern Rhodesia," she writes, "the settlers have achieved a semi-responsible Government of their own, and have adopted a Native policy on something approaching the South African model." Nobody who had visited Southern Rhodesia or understood its political evolution could have written that sentence. The Colony is completely self-governing, apart only from the fact that the Imperial Government has a right of veto in respect of legislation affecting the Native—and the legislation of the Rhodesian Parliament has been so irreproachable in every particular that on no single occasion has the Imperial Government found cause to intervene. The Imperial Government dictates policy throughout the whole of the African Colonial Empire, and since it is presumably as concerned to see fair play for the African in Southern Rhodesia as in the other territories, this one fact reveals the fundamental misconceptions of your contributor.

Southern Rhodesia's policy in Native matters is essentially analogous to that which prevails throughout the rest of British East and Central Africa. It is the policy of trusteeship, and by no stretch of the imagination can it be described, as in your article, as implying "a black serfdom." Up-to-date proof that Southern Rhodesian policy is akin to that of East Africa, and not that of South Africa, is to be found in the recent enlistment of a Native regiment, the Rhodesian African Rifles. Some of your readers may be aware that Africans do not bear arms in the Union, but that excellent battalions of locally recruited Native troops have served the Eastern African territories for decades.

The references to "the growing hostility between white settlers in the uplands of Africa and the Colonial Office" are anachronistic. For some considerable period before the outbreak of war differences had been considerably reduced, and the only complaints during the past fifteen months have been that the Colonies have not been permitted to contribute as much in men, money and material as they wished.

Your correspondent is equally untimely in dragging out the old red herring of "paramountcy" and citing something written ten years ago when Lord Passfield, in his short and unhappy term as political head of the Colonial Office, endeavoured to fasten upon British Colonial Africa a definition of policy which would have denied fair play to non-Natives. These incidents are best forgotten, but if they were to be resurrected it should certainly have been indicated that the Passfield interpretation of "paramountcy" was rejected by the Joint Select Committee of both Houses of Parliament which reported upon Closer Union in East Africa, that that Committee's exposition is in consonance with East African views, and that subsequent Secretaries and Under-Secretaries of State representing the Labour Party, such as Mr. Malcolm MacDonald and Mr. George Hall, have contented themselves with discharging their trusteeship without seeking to weight the scales in favour of one section of the community and to the detriment of other sections.

Settlers in East and Central Africa have not in recent years quarrelled with the Colonial Office because it sought to protect the Natives, as your contributor alleges, but because it was regarded as dilatory in promoting development, and, in particular, because it sought to postpone the natural and inevitable union of Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika in the one case, and of the two Rhodesias and Nyasaland in the other. Such differences are in any event not reprehensible, but merely a repetition of the history of the earlier Colonies, which now enjoy the status of Dominions. F. S. Joelson,
91 Gt. Titchfield Street, Editor,
London, W.1. *East Africa and Rhodesia.*

LOCAL AUTHORITIES

Sir,—Mr. Ritchie Calder has said many interesting things on our civil defence services in your recent issues, but his article on the breakdown of local government in your last number is a caricature rather than a reasoned criticism. It abounds with such well-worn phrases as "bombers have no respect for boundaries" and "confusion of authorities." Yet a variety of authorities and a large number of boundaries are inherent in any system of *local* government. Mr. Calder accuses borough boundaries of "marching down the middle of roads, dodging up side streets and waltzing round buildings." Where else does he expect them to go? In his enthusiasm to prove the excessive number of authorities controlling the casualty services, he even invents a new type of local government official entitled the "District Engineer" and places him in charge of Rescue Parties in London, which are in fact controlled by the L.C.C. through their District Surveyors.

This kind of light-hearted joking at the expense of local authorities is likely to do them far more harm than good. It is true that they have failed miserably to cope with the demands that air raids have made upon them. It is true that the machinery of local government is antiquated and badly in need of reform. But to over-emphasise this is to elevate a lesser defect into an altogether undue prominence. The principal reasons for the recent shortcomings of local authorities are surely two: the powerful and ever-increasing control exercised by the officials of the Ministries of Home Security and Health, and the extreme lethargy and lack of enterprise of most local authorities. These can only be overcome by taking steps to reinvigorate the local authorities themselves. Every citizen and every organisation in the labour movement should make it their duty to give far more attention to their local council than they are doing at present. The restoration of local elections would help enormously to make councillors more responsive to the needs of their electors.

Once local democracy had been restored to proper activity, it would be possible to make whatever changes in organisation were found necessary, because there would be some guarantee that any reforms would be a genuine up-growth of local government, and not the down-growth of the state that Mr. Calder so rightly fears. With local authorities in their present lethargic condition, demands for the immediate reform of local government will tend to encourage the Government to appoint more Regional Commissioners and to continue their present policy of gradually depriving local authorities of their independence. John Sullivan

NOT MURRY, BUT KEATS

Sir,—I have no doubt made many portentous announcements, and shall probably make many more: but the one attributed to me by Mr. Peter Quennell in his article "Much Ado About Milton," that "There is death in Milton" is not mine, but Keats': from whom I quoted it. "Life to him (Milton) would be death to me."

The Old Rectory, J. Middleton Murry
Larling, Nr. Norwich.

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Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

For more than a decade Dean Inge has been the outstanding success of popular journalism. What are the reasons for his success? He told his audience, the tired middle-class man in the evening train, that everything was wrong. And that it was wrong in exactly the way the tired middle-class man wanted it to be wrong. He could get into his train at Cannon Street and at once start re-living all the headlines and classical gossip of the early Christian struggle, of the Middle Ages and the nineteenth century; he could pitch into the Roman Catholic Church, the Reds, the Trades Unions, Mr. Lloyd George and the Inland Revenue; he could have the angriest controversies about sex, emigration, the Empire, the Pope, democracy and birth control; and by the time he got out at Catford half an hour later, he had the pleasing sensation, so strengthening to complacency, of having all his prejudices massaged into life and of feeling that his worst forebodings were justified. A tough, terse cleric had "spoken out" and had not minced matters: there was a decline in respect for absolute values and it had corresponded with the rise in the income tax.

Of course, the tired man in the train, conservative though he was, did not really believe this; but this was how he *felt* when suddenly taken aback by too searching a question. The popular press blustered and he blustered in response; but not for long. For very few people take the popular press seriously. A Dean in the *Standard* was, like a bat in the belfry, an entertainment. This was especially true of the Dean, for hardly any of his readers knew much about history or the Church; when they did, they violently disagreed with him. His success seemed to lie in exhibiting not the Church militant but the Church disgruntled, and it was clever of the newspapers which specialise in wishful thinking to realise how much we wish to hear someone or something is wrong. But even more than his instinct for bringing to the surface every prejudice the mild middle-class man had quietly boiling itself away inside his mind, the Dean's style has been the making of him. Like the style of the Beaverbrook leaders, it was abrupt, lucid, personal and apparently detached, a series of headlines in small print; the very fact that one sentence did not often follow on from the one preceding it, that a paragraph might begin with an assertion about Spain and end on something about women and certainly be unrelated to the previous paragraph or the main subject, gave the page the air of a variety programme. If this was the style, the manner had its random, sceptical scholarship, its anecdotes about Constantine, its table-talk from Theodore Roosevelt. The sardonic toughness and occasional cynicisms had the right strong flavour. The Dean had a surprising elasticity and broadness of mind as long as he alone has done the talking.

Unhappily, the star writers for the popular press become so habituated to laying down the law that they lose the art of collecting and stating the facts; and while this does not matter to the newspaper reader, it matters greatly to the less-hurried readers of books. I have just read *The Fall of the Idols*,* and I find it very hard to say exactly what it is about or precisely where the Dean stands. I find him, for example, saying that "sowers of hatred are the worst public enemies" and deploring the decline in charity of mind; yet in the same breath telling us that Lenin, Trotsky and Stalin are "detestable," "scoundrels," etc., while Benito (Punctual Trains) Mussolini is a great man; that 14,000 priests and nuns have been assassinated by the Spanish Reds and that:

> The grandparents of the working men who support Major Attlee would have recoiled in horror from professing friendship with these devils. I am quite unable to account for what looks like a real reversion to the worst kind of savagery openly approved by men who themselves have perhaps never killed anything larger than a wasp.

One is left gasping at the opening sentence of the next paragraph:

> Together with this shocking evil we note a decline in men's regard for truth. . . . The principal aim of the liars is the eradication of charitable feelings and behaviour.

Surely the Christian apologist, the admirer of humanism, the reader of history, owes us an explanation of why he generalises about the attitude of our English grandparents to Spain in the nineteenth century without noting that we had always, up to 1936, supported the Spanish Left; why he prefers to read the atrocities of one side only in the Spanish Civil War, and even so, where he gets his figures. The controversy is stale; but the state of mind in which he revives it is only too bitter with that disregard for truth, that fanaticism and dogmatism which he attributes to the younger generation.

This particular episode occurs in the opening chapter of his book, which examines the health of the idea of progress. Other chapters deal historically with what he calls economism, democracy, pacifism, humanism and religion. The idols which the Dean thinks have been destroyed by the rise of Fascism and this war are Progress, Democracy, Free Trade, Socialism. Marxism is dismissed as old-fashioned; nevertheless, one of the weaknesses of Democracy is that "any powerful organisation within the State which will stick at nothing can make democratic government almost impossible. It cannot deal with anti-social conspiracies." Socialism is finished; yet later on we learn that governments which make war must become socialised. So it isn't finished after all? People are too rich; yet it is despoiling them to tax them heavily. It is unjust that one-tenth of the population should pay five-sixths of the taxes. Even if they have five-sixths of the income? And what about the virtues of the simple and poor life to which the Dean looks forward? It looks as though it is easier to believe in and even live a frugal and ascetic life on £1,000 a year than to do so on £150 when the hungry mind dreams of orgies. One moment the disinterestedness of the comfortably-off seems to be admired, the next they are denounced for their respectability; one moment it is the *petit bourgeois* who are the backbone of the nation—the disciples of Jesus were *petit bourgeois*—the next it is the half-baked minds of this class who are responsible for Hitler and the idolatry of the State. Progress will cease because individualism will be destroyed by Socialism or bureaucracy; yet individualism runs to seed in eccentric religions like theosophy, in political gangsterism, or in an exhaustion which leads to a lack of interest in the things around us and a craving for the exotic, the Roman "weariness of life." Looking back upon the bewildering list of generalisations which the Dean puts before us, a sort of *hors d'oeuvres* before a feast of catastrophe, one is even more bewildered by the coincidence of the stoical and not intolerant cleric who is quite prepared to see heaven and earth pass away, with the angry party journalist who is very afraid they will do so if the middle class is ruined in this war.

The two subjects on which one can read the Dean with respect are humanism and religion. Here his analysis, though necessarily rapid and temperamentally frigid, is on an altogether higher plane. A believer in Christianised Platonism, he has no use for majority religions and is convinced that political power corrupts. Only the few believe at any time. And in any case much of the Christian ethic has been absorbed into our civilisation just as tracts of paganism were absorbed by the Church. His own creed is quite clear, simple, dignified, and one wonders whether its freedom from conventional ecclesiastical dogmatism is not, by an irony, the very thing that has driven him to conventional prejudices about politics and society. One would have thought he would have speculated upon both the relation of the Church to the new political formations and upon the nature of individual religious belief in a world where the individual loses part of himself in larger groups. What kind of religious revival does he expect? He cannot prophesy. He withdraws. He is convinced only that war gives an impetus to bad religion. His sole contribution to the future is, characteristically, very Protestant and very practical. He would put all candidates for Holy Orders through a course of the psychology of religion "with a view to making them trained consultants for those in trouble with their souls." Half the problems, he thinks, would be sexual. That the suggestion should be at present alarming indicates how distant the Protestant Church has become from the individual it set free.

V. S. Pritchett

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* *The Fall of the Idols.* W. R. Inge. Putnam. 8*s.* 6*d.*

THE RAPE OF THE LOCK

The Rape of the Lock and Other Poems. Edited by Geoffrey Tillotson. The Twickenham Edition of the Poems of Alexander Pope. Volume II. *Methuen.* 16*s.*

There are very few long poems—perhaps not more than six or seven in any modern language—that can now be read with continuous enjoyment from opening to closing line. Our poetic appetite has grown finicking and selective; and, whereas our ancestors sat down to a new instalment of *Childe Harold* or some morocco-bound gilt-edged volume by Moore or Southey, and read it through as nowadays we read a novel, making a liberal use of their handkerchiefs at pathetic passages or indenting margins and fly-leaves with angry pencil-points, we feel a nervous qualm at the sight of a verse production approaching to epic size. One poem, however—though by modern standards it may be accounted fairly long—seems as brief still and quite as brilliant as the day that it first appeared. And then, *The Rape of the Lock* has yet another distinction. It is one of those rare works of art that have benefited by being extensively revised, and have gained in bulk and at the same time gained in beauty. Pope's emendations were magisterial: his second thoughts, with scarcely an exception, were thoughts of genius. The fantastic poem that he had started to oblige a friend, and make peace between two squabbling Catholic families, was rounded off to satisfy his own requirements.

Most readers are aware that there exist an earlier and a later version of *The Rape of the Lock*; but not every reader has troubled to examine them side by side. The study of poetic variants is often tiresome: for the discovery that a poet began with "*blue*," considered "*cerulean*" and eventually decided to compromise with "*azure*," does nothing to heighten our admiration of the completed image. Pope's literary workmanship is always interesting. The effect of the poem is that of definition combined with delicacy: it is also that of magnitude combined with littleness. On the one hand, the poet diminishes: on the other, he magnifies. And, as his editor points out in a sensible foreword, while the poet's theme is microscopic and his imagery fine-drawn, again and again he achieves an air of grandeur that transcends the subject. Thus the battle of the cards develops into an epic struggle. Pope was at endless pains over this particular passage, and played with himself game after game till he had worked out the exact manoeuvres. Beneath his dazzled eyes, the combatants grew large and menacing:

> The *Baron* now his *Diamonds* pours apace;
> Th' embroider'd *King* who shows but half his Face,
> And his refulgent *Queen*, with Pow'rs combin'd,
> Of broken Troops an easie conquest find.
> *Clubs*, *Diamonds*, *Hearts*, in wild Disorder seen,
> With Throngs promiscuous strow the level Green.
> Thus when dispers'd a routed Army runs,
> Of *Asia's* Troops, and *Africk's* Sable Sons,
> With like confusion different Nations fly,
> Of various Habit and of various Dye,
> The pierc'd Battalions dis-united fall,
> In Heaps on Heaps; one Fate o'erwhelms them all.

And, so thoroughly did the epic spirit take possession of him, that, when Belinda escapes Codille and conquers with the last trick, she gives tongue to a cry of triumph that echoes through Hampton Court:

> She sees, and trembles at th' approaching Ill,
> Just in the Jaws of Ruin, and *Codille*,
> And now (as oft in some distemper'd state)
> On one nice *Trick* depends the gen'ral Fate.
> An *Ace* of Hearts steps forth: The *King* unseen
> Lurk'd in her Hand, and mourn'd his captive *Queen*.
> He springs to Vengeance with an eager pace,
> And falls like Thunder on the prostrate *Ace*.
> The Nymph exulting fills with Shouts the Sky,
> The Walls, the Woods, and long Canals reply.

The whole episode was inserted in the second version of 1714, as part of the splendid additions by which Pope transformed the rather flimsy verse anecdote that he had written to please his old friend Caryll two years earlier. Every addition intensified the poem and enlarged its scope. It is true that Belinda's awakening figures in the earlier version; but the solemn ceremony at the dressing table, where the young woman enacts the double part of goddess and ministrant, venerating her own reflection as it appears from the mirror's depths:

> First, rob'd in White, the Nymph intent adores
> With Head uncover'd, the *Cosmetic* Pow'rs.
> A heav'nly Image in the Glass appears,
> To that she bends, to that her Eyes she rears;
> Th' inferior Priestess, at her Altar's side,
> Trembling, begins the sacred Rites of Pride,

was grafted, with magnificent results, on to the original opening canto and helped to lift the work towards a new level of poetic interest and make of Belinda herself something more than human, glittering, remote, portentous among her ribbons and furbelows. Pope's mingled worship of and contempt for women found utterance in this radiant personification of Beauty and Vanity. Belinda has now little connection with Miss Arabella Fermor, a somewhat foolish and conventional young lady about the Court who professed to be much annoyed by her vicarious fame, but afterwards posed complacently as the poem's heroine. She has the grandiosity of a myth, the charm of a symbol.

In fact, the poem's appeal is as permanent as its occasion was trifling. Mr. Tillotson's introduction may be slightly overloaded with the usual references to *The Rape of the Lock's* inferior predecessors—Tassoni's *Secchia Rapita*, Boileau's *Le Lutrin* and Garth's *Dispensary*—and with some tedious discussions of the burlesque and mock-heroic; but it contains a spirited defence of the author's method. "The world of the poem (he writes) is vast and complicated." And elsewhere:

> . . . The critics . . . miss what an editor cannot—the way the poem beds itself in its city and in its time. The renaissance critics considered that the epic should be vast. . . . But the scene of the epics is empty desert beside the milieu of *The Rape of the Lock*, its close-packed London.

Here among the machinery of Sylphs and Salamanders (an addition so neatly accommodated to the rest of the poem that Pope himself described it as "one of the greatest proofs of judgement of anything I ever did") are not only the white-gloved dandies hovering around Hampton Court, but the coffee-house politicians sitting with half-closed eyes, astrologers, Biblical commentators and virtuosi. Behind them open larger and grimmer prospects; and the hour at which Belinda assembles her card party is also the hour at which the helpless felon is condemned to Tyburn, when—

> . . . Hungry Judges soon the Sentence sign,
> And Wretches hang that Jury-men may dine.

Contrast and irony are an essential adjunct of the poem's style. Parody, borrowing and learned by-play enrich its texture; but not for a moment do they detract from its grace and youthfulness. Never was deep feeling expressed so lightly, or erudition concealed with such a perfect self-command.

Thanks to Mr. Tillotson's useful foreword and invaluable footnotes, the common reader may gain a fresh insight into the quality of Pope's genius and a new understanding of his complex literary temperament. Equally sound is the work that the editor has done on Pope's Chaucerian "translations" and those two superb, and by modern critics often undervalued, poems, *Eloisa to Abelard* and the *Elegy to the Memory of an Unfortunate Lady*, both of them works that show the poet at his most romantic, though each was a deliberate exercise in a popular contemporary form. It was Pope's strength that he could be imitative yet remain spontaneous, and temper "correctitude" with the boldness and liveliness of a romantic writer.

PETER QUENNELL

OUR PROPER STUDY

Man on His Nature. By SIR CHARLES SHERRINGTON, O.M. The Gifford Lectures, Edinburgh, 1937–8. *Cambridge University Press.* 21s.

In Augustus John's portrait of Sherrington the hands are an unforgettable symbol of dexterity guided by intellect. The eyes, with their wary, sidelong glance, tell of a mind unblinkered, keen as a scalpel, yet not blind to mystery. In this book not only intelligence and long experience in neurological research but also general cultural interest are brought to bear on the problem of man's nature. Sir Charles's knowledge of poetry, which provides him with useful quotations, must also fortify him against the typical weakness of the scientific specialist, the inability to grasp the implications of the more developed and characteristically human activities of man, and the consequent attempt to account for these wholly in terms of purely biological or purely physical principles. Science and literature here combine to form a conviction that the unfinished story of humanity is at once an episode in the natural history of this planet and a significant, though painful, and perhaps ultimately tragic spiritual epic. In consequence the temper of this book varies between cold scrutiny and a restrained fervour, compounded of wonder at the physical subtlety of man's body and realisation of the achievement and promise of his mentality. The style, though almost "literary," and to a contemporary ear faintly archaic, bears no taint of affectation, and rises sometimes to luminous imagery.

The book opens with an account of an intelligent, and in some ways strangely modern, sixteenth-century physician, Jean Fernel. Like his contemporaries, Fernel owed much to Aristotle; but whereas for Aristotle the soul was the "form" inherent in the living body, for Fernel this "form," the soul, was wholly distinct and supernatural. It entered the body some time after conception to instigate and control all the vital processes. To-day the physical operation of "life" appears to be simply an affair of atoms, and of their internal and external electro-magnetic fields. The living cell is a minute "many-chambered gobbet of foam," "a shifting labyrinth of dissolving walls and floors which form, melt and re-form as the work of the chemical factory requires." From conception to death all the processes of the human body, including the brain, are almost certainly describable wholly in terms of the electrical changes of such unitary organisms in close relation.

But how does mind find a place in the picture? Sir Charles's own work on the brain has convinced him that in a very important sense the mind has its seat in a particular organ, the "roof-brain." A dog with its roof-brain eliminated is simply an automaton. It can eat, run, avoid stereotyped dangers; but all it

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actions are mere fixed responses to specific stimuli. It has lost its versatility, intelligence, friendliness, devotion to a master, in fact all its rudimentary " human " characters, if I may so name them.

The action of the roof-brain, according to Sir Charles, is unitary. Save for particular traits associated with the senses (and motor activities ?) it cannot be analysed into localised functions. Association within the roof-brain is based, he argues, not on physical connectedness but on psychical contemporaneousness. I have never felt entirely convinced that this case was proved. For instance, certain characteristics of binocular vision, cited as evidence of purely psychical fusion, do not seem wholly beyond the scope of physical mechanism.

However, the roof-brain clearly is the specific organ of mind ; or rather, as Sir Charles rightly insists, of " recognisable mind." Associated with lower levels of the nervous system there may well be mental processes not open to introspection. And animals much more lowly than " our companion, the dog " may have some kind of mental life, though unself-conscious. Even individual cells may have rudimentary minds ; but there is nothing in their observable behaviour which cannot be in theory accounted for in purely physical terms. Though there is no assignable lower limit to the occurrence of mind, " recognisable " mind emerges only in the roof-brain.

Though Sir Charles, unlike Fernel, regards mind as " within nature," he insists that it is not accountable by physical principles. Its interaction with the physical remains a mystery. " We are forced to accept energy and mind as a working biological unity, although we cannot describe the law of that unity." Energy, " complete in itself," offers " no crevice for interpenetration by anything else." Even though the interaction of mind and energy seems theoretically impossible, Sir Charles feels bound to accept it. But surely he is mistaken in supposing that he escapes the problem by merely insisting on the unity of body and mind as " a single serial event."

HOVIS
TRADE MARK
needs less
Butter
It spreads more thinly and the ADDED WHEAT GERM makes it just as nutritious
Best Bakers Bake it
Macclesfield

He is concerned more to describe the observable facts and think out their immediate implications than to construct a precise and comprehensive philosophical theory. This is his merit, but also his weakness. For instance, unless I misunderstand him, he regards the whole physical process of biological evolution as theoretically describable in terms of electromagnetism ; yet I cannot believe that it is only for literary effect that he so frequently personifies " Nature " and attributes purpose to " her." That purpose, on this planet at least, seems to him to be the development of mind in individual organisms. On the other hand, he often speaks as though the universe outside humanity were entirely indifferent to " values," which, he holds, are values only for the finite mind. This is mind's glory, that it creates values. And as it wakens into clearer and more comprehensive awareness it conceives and strives to embody more developed values.

In particular, he says, the great task before humanity now is to outgrow the " predacious " mentality. The individual must somehow learn to feel for others as for himself, and to act altruistically. The achievement of this great step may involve a biological change in human nature. If man fails in this, " Earth," he suggests (again personifying) will evolve some abler species. For humanity is but a stage, not the gaol. He does not refer to the possibility that there may now remain no species capable of evolving so far as to take over the torch when man's part is finished, in fact, that man may be not only " Earth's " greatest achievement thus far, but also her last hope.

One can imagine a future historian judging Sherrington much as Sir Charles himself judges Fernel. " His limitations," it may be said, " were the outcome of his age ; his virtues were those which distinguish all true vehicles of the exploring spirit in every age : honesty, clear sight, and a sense of mystery still unsolved."

OLAF STAPLEDON

FOUR POETS

The Gathering Storm. By WILLIAM EMPSON. *Faber.* 6s.

Death at Sea. By FREDERIC PROKOSCH. *Chatto.* 6s.

Song and Idea. By RICHARD EBERHART. *Chatto.* 6s.

Blind Men's Flowers are Green. By RAYNER HEPPENSTALL. *Secker and Warburg.* 5s.

Not one of these volumes of verse breaks a record, but of the four *The Gathering Storm* is of greater interest than the others. Its appearance presents, to a Cambridge contemporary, a welcome opportunity to pay a tribute to Mr. Empson's remarkable poetry. Mr. Empson writes with a scholarly and exact knowledge of the precise meaning and history of the words that he is using. He is more concerned to write an English that retains all that past and present usage has given to words, phrases and concepts, than to make himself understood by a public who happens to be ignorant of, or indifferent to, linguistic matters. Yet no poet has studied with more intelligence or with deeper concern contemporary science, politics, literature, and events. The merits of Mr. Empson's poetry cannot be assessed in terms of any popularity it is likely to achieve now or in the future. That obscurity is a limitation, if not a defect in his poetry, Mr. Empson himself admits, and his later poems indicate a rather unsuccessful attempt to change his spots. But while there can be few now, or ever, who care enough about the exact use of words to appreciate the decimal fineness of this work, that happy few will read these poems with pleasure.

Mr. Empson's English is undefiled, though his method is otherwise not unlike Joyce's, but Shakespeare's sonnets are perhaps a more direct influence. To take an example :

> The god arkitect whose coping with the Flood
> Groyned with white stallion arches of the main
> (And miner, deeps that in the dome of the brain
> Take Iris' arches' pupillage and Word)
> Walked on the bucking water like a bird
> And, guard, went round its rampart and its ball . . .

Mr. Empson can be simple enough on a simple theme (again like Gray—on the Masters of Colleges, or the Cat and the Goldfish). " Just a smack at Auden " is a witty piece of pre-war seriousness, written when we were " waiting for the end." Nothing obscure here :

> Shall I send a wire, boys ? Where is there to send ?
> All are under fire, boys, waiting for the end.
> Shall I turn a sire, boys ? Shall I choose a friend ?
> The fat is in the pyre, boys, waiting for the end.

Perhaps the best poem in the collection is " Aubade." To read this poem is to understand that feelings can gain in depth by transmutation into thoughts, or that thoughts can be felt. Mr. Empson's greatest gift is a mind that feels—and the mind can feel with a vision more poetic than the heart.

In neat contrast to Mr. Empson's obscurity is Mr. Heppenstall's. His is the real kind, produced by lack of sense, and this no labour will unravel. Syntactical and grammatical errors combine with lack of meaning to baffle the reader. Mr. Heppenstall has only one striking literary trick—that of blasphemy :

> My lack of Christ, my dove, my doe

is a new form of address certainly to a mistress. But apart from the questionable advance of blasphemy, this poet makes little progress from the " my dove, my doe " home-made and hand-woven vocabulary and sentiment.

Two volumes of easy straightforward poetry by two young American poets can be read with considerable enjoyment. To take Mr. Eberhart, the less-known poet first, one finds that goodness and natural simplicity of feeling that characterises Whitman and the author of *Moby Dick.* Without a trace of falseness, Mr. Eberhart can write, in a metre characteristically American, " O all peoples ! O mighty shadows," or " When I think of her, the power of poetry arises." Mr. Eberhart rings true, but often one feels that the poem falls short of the vision. He uses well a short, uneven New England metre :

> Yet, O marvellous crispness,
> Dim, but perfect structure,
> Thin as matter is,
> It has its wondrous lure.

Sophistication suits him less well. He challenges the critic in a Blakeish vein :

> The critic with his pained eye
> Cannot my source espy
> For truly and purely to eye it
> He would have as critic to die.

It is so easy to retort that poetic feelings are common experience, and that poetry is made of words as pictures of paint. And that, as a poet, Mr. Eberhart is open to criticism for bad rhetoric :

> Save me these pictures, you denizens,
> Captain worms of the gross earth,
> That I may tear from my mind such album.

for bad grammar :

> Like a nighted cell the day shine nails,
> Single, sounding funereal, shall allure.

for affectation (poor G. M. Hopkins !) :

> Lynx-lensed weeds' fixed-pricking stare.

and of platitude (it *has* been said before) :

> Goodness is impersonality
> Evil is personality,
> Desire is impotent,
> Serenity is potent.

No more a primitive than Lawrence or Rousseau, Mr. Eberhart is yet able at times to see the world

As it was in my childhood,
Violent, vivid, and of infinite possibility.

In contrast to Mr. Eberhart, who has something to say but writes gauchely, Mr. Prokosch says nothing in particular with suavety and elegance. He takes trouble with his verse, and his success is the measure of what careful imitation and practice can do. His are verses that any editor could publish without embarrassment, and any critic read without pain:

Let us be honest, then. It is not impossible
That our crime was an incapacity to suffer,
We who adored geology
Laughed at our uncles.

Two lines in Stephen Spender's style, two more in Auden's, are neatly served up in a Greek lyric metre with a result that does credit to all. Mr. Prokosch's own contribution to his poetry is a wide American horizon, and a Grand Tourist view of Europe—both pleasantly easy on war-time nerves. One sits back and enjoys, as one does a travel-bureau brochure, his attractive poster-pictures of places one would like to see in comfort:

The sailors quarrelling and wrestling on the Cornish strand,
The washerwomen of Guadalajara ranged along the sand,
The boys combing the stallions under the giant sequoias,
The blind illuminated cripple extending his empty hand.

Mr. Prokosch has not only "been places" but has read the necessary English and French authors. Few will object to his calling the plane trees of Paris "Maples" (for nature is only a back-cloth for sun-bronzed sailors, heroes and holiday-makers), and we can but acquiesce when this American Horace Walpole comments on Molière (and ourselves):

A civilisation as marvellous, and as far, far away
As that of Rameses . . .

And whatever it illuminated, whatever it gave
Of learning and perception in wave upon black wave
Lies lost as utterly as Othello's howl, or Dido's unforgettable cave.

for the spectator is unanswerable, like the solipsist.

KATHLEEN RAINE

THE EXILE OF PUTNEY

Benes: The Man and the Statesman. By EDWARD B. HITCHCOCK. Hamilton. *12s. 6d.*

A few years ago a Viennese illustrated weekly published a photograph, taken before the last war, of a pleasant, in no way very distinguished-looking, scrubby-haired Czech footballer sitting cross-legged on the ground in the middle of his team. I remember being extremely surprised and amused to read the legend underneath: "The President of the Czechoslovak Republic as a young man." Not very long before, I had seen Dr. Benes driving into the great Hradschin Palace in Prague, with the Legionaries saluting outside the gates, and, below, all the domes and spires and sculptured bridges of the ancient Czech capital spreading away into the blue-purple haze. These two pictures lingered in my mind side by side, and jumped out to haunt me with their contrasts on another occasion. That was in the autumn of last year, when I heard the same man quietly discuss his vanished State and the future of his suffering people, in a little room in a London suburb. It seemed a long and terrible journey to have made in so short a time: from the Palace of the Kings of Bohemia to a villa in Putney, from the peaceful leadership of a strong and liberated people to exile, and renewed war and the wreck of the hopes of a lifetime.

To these three pictures, Mr. Hitchcock has

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NEW STATESMAN AND NATION

now added a fourth, which I shall find it very hard to forget. He describes how he went to see Benes in his Chicago hotel on a March morning in 1939. It was the day when the Nazi tanks were rolling through the streets of Prague, and even the rump of the Republic left after Munich ceased to have any independence; a moment of the greatest agony, perhaps, for the Czech people since the Battle of the White Mountain more than three centuries before. And in the room in Chicago:

> The shades were drawn and nobody spoke. It was as though someone had just died. . . . Madame Benes had told me that Dr. Benes was "resting," and suggested in her gentle way that it might be better to wait until the morrow to talk with him.

But the next morning this extraordinary man was up, keen as ever, ready to start the fight all over again. And he started it by taking immediate and successful steps to prevent the U.S.A. recognising the conquest of his country, as important an action for his cause as an engagement won in the field.

This episode is typical of the hero of Mr. Hitchcock's narrative. Benes emerges as a man of absolutely immense energy, working with the same speed and tireless concentration when *rapporteur-general* to an international conference in Geneva as when a penniless young student in Paris. This power of work, and an unusually highly developed gift for appreciating the legal subtleties of a complex problem and for producing an effective compromise, a synthesis of opposing viewpoints, in negotiation, seem to have been the chief qualities that have distinguished him in his career. And yet there has undoubtedly been something else; for a man with so little obvious charm, who was constantly making so many enemies for himself among politicians, could not have kept his hold on the popular imagination with only these assets of mind and will. It was this something else that must early have attracted Masaryk, and led him to the decision that the eager student, so much younger than himself, was the only person fit to share with him the great burden of the rebuilding of a nation.

Masaryk saw a spiritual crisis in Western civilisation as the reality behind the last war; the crisis is still continuing; and the gravest problem we have to face is whether the men who came to the top in 1918 are the right men finally to resolve it. Mr. Hitchcock's book, which is dangerously near hagiography and is written at times in a slightly irritating "Children's Hour" style, gives no clue to this. He accepts without question tendencies of Czech foreign relations which have been hotly debated, and scarcely deals at all with the anti-Bolshevik and class aspect of both internal and external policy that became so significant in the final stages of the catastrophe. It is nevertheless a valuable, intimate study of a remarkable personality who is still very much a force to be reckoned with, and a detailed reminder of the importance of the Czech problem in any peace settlement. In dealing with the Munich days, he has relied to a large extent on quotations from the official declarations and reports; they are indeed classic and almost impossible to comment on. There are some things one can hardly bear to read again, such as the description of Chamberlain yawning without concealment while the Czechs were being given their death sentence. The Poles have paid in full for Colonel Beck's rapacity over Teschen, and one of the most hopeful signs for the future is the recently signed accord between the Czechs and Poles in London. We have pledged ourselves to make amends for the yawns; but it is still not clear how a repetition of our victory in 1918 is going to produce a lasting solution of Europe's "crisis behind the crisis," without an entirely new conception to animate and transform it.

JOHN LEHMANN

GILDED LILIES

The Tide of Fortune. By STEFAN ZWEIG. *Cassell.* 10s. 6d.

One cannot help wishing sometimes that the Germans would learn to leave well alone. It is not only in politics that they give ordinary folk the impression of going too far. In all their activities, but especially (or so it seems to me) in philosophy and literature, they seem intent on squeezing the last ounce of nonsense from every situation. Take, for instance, this book. Mr. Zweig is a distinguished writer, though not, perhaps, quite so distinguished as at times he appears. Still, he is a genuine creative artist, with sensibility and imagination. Here he has given us twelve "historic miniatures." Twelve moments in the story of mankind. Some of them are good moments, genuinely moving—Cicero's end, the fall of Constantinople, Waterloo, Lenin's return to Russia. Others are more personal dramas, but not without importance: Handel composing the Messiah, Goethe and the Marienbad Elegy, Scott at the South Pole. These are not epochs in our history, yet they are triumphs of the human spirit and thus have interest and significance. The rest seem to me just silly or near-silly, and certainly unworthy of the lines from Shakespeare that preface the collection:

There is a tide in the affairs of men
Which, taken at the flood, leads on to fortune;
Omitted, all the voyage of their life
Is bound in shallows and in miseries.

Mr. Zweig's interpretation of the word *fortune* seems to decrease as the book goes on. With the exception of Lenin, it comes to mean either luck or money, and I do not believe that Mark Anthony meant quite that. And then it is suspicious that the present and near past provide so many dramatic instants as compared with earlier times—six in a century as against six in nineteen hundred years. Keep away from the present, philosophic historians! We have not yet got the true perspective.

But many readers will not agree with me. These are at least good stories about real men, men bigger and more vital than the average. The stories are efficiently, if a little prosaically, told, though not one will compare with the unpretentious brilliance of the *Procurateur de Judée*. My real quarrel with Mr. Zweig is that he presents his tales of a grandfather with such a promise of enlightenment. History, he tells us, is "the spiritual mirror of Nature," and then goes on: "Always creative, it is in such tense moments of compressed formation that the artistry of the historic process is revealed; for though a million energies animate our world, it is only in these explosive incidents that their significance becomes unmistakable." What on earth does that mean? As a pedestrian Scot I like my history neat, not à la Spengler.

FLORA GRIERSON

LOST IN THE PACIFIC

The Story of the Pacific. By HENDRIK VAN LOON. *Harrap.* 8s. 6d.

In the course of his story, Mr. van Loon says to us, "Had we not better stop a minute and come up for a little air?" Certainly he had been rushing us past so many facts that we were getting confused. Yet the author is evidently a humane man; he has the kindly nature of his ancestral countrymen. When he showed that understanding of our breathlessness he was north of the Philippines, well into his yarn, and was telling us of the Portuguese and Dutch long ago in Japan, and of the activities and jealousies there of Jesuit and Franciscan missions. This took him into a comparison of the Merovingian Kings with the Shogunate. From that you will see the pace was fairly fast; yet he did not stop that minute for air, but was off at once after Abel Tasman, van Diemen (here we go, well south again), Dampier, Robinson Crusoe, Rousseau, and the French Revolution.

Why the last? Because that revolution, to some extent, was Selkirk's fault. Was he not marooned on a Pacific island? You will remember the idylls the romantics made of savage life. See, too, what that cunning fellow Defoe did with barren Juan Fernandez—put it off the Orinoco, for he knew what the public wanted; and what he wanted was a best-seller, and got it. Rousseau, we are reminded, was the simpleton to be caught by such nonsense, and therefore, "by the time the muddle-headed Swiss had started the conflagration known as the Great French Revolution, the sad truth about Australia was beginning to reveal itself." But why Australia? For the reason that Defoe was preceded by a German, who wrote a romance of New Holland long before James Cook was at Botany Bay; his name was Hans Jakob Christoffel von Grimmelshausen. So there we are.

Yet are we? As much as all that cannot be run swiftly and easily into one chapter without making a reader dizzy; and dizziness should not be one of the aims of instruction. Mr. van Loon's fluency and plausibility with a wide range of information only make matters worse. A reader is plunged out of his depth into the Pacific, and is struggling for breath among the whirling controversies of the geographers, historians, geologists, archaeologists, and ethnologists, when he had supposed he was only off for a nice pleasure cruise. Mr. van Loon's very opening gave him that idea:

> As a child I had heard all about the Panama Canal. Early in the 'fifties a brother of my grandmother's moved to Brazil. He had survived yellow fever and revolutions and amassed a considerable fortune. When I was six or seven years old he had come back to Holland, bringing his family—his wondrous family of dark-eyed, dark-haired daughters.

These semi-Latin girls, it seems, were fatigued by placid Holland and went to Paris, proud o their ropes of jet-black hair, and got on a bus, but when they alighted from it their beautiful hair was gone. In those days chignons were fashionable, and it was easy to lose good plaits on a bus, as the fashion had to be maintained somehow in a hair shortage.

Are we in the Pacific? Not yet, only about to enter the Panama Canal from the west. But it won't be long before we are involved in the mystery of the migrations of the Polynesians in their double canoes with a central platform; extinct craft of which so little is known that you may guess almost anything you please. Besides, what means had the savages for correct navigation on voyages so long? Again, nobody knows, so we may speculate. And who were these Polynesians? Of that you may say they came from India, Java, or what not. Some say they are of the same stock as the Malays, but some people would say anything. And who carved the images on Easter Island; and why is the Pacific so extraordinary a wide and deep mass of water? These puzzles leave out of account the numerous early voyages of discovery in the Pacific of the Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, English and French. A glance at a list of the Hakluyt Society's publications warns us that we dare not hope to learn much about all those voyages in a few days with one book.

Though the trouble with the world is its vast accumulation of knowledge, of which it has made nothing but a horrific muddle, we continue to be avid of more. That may be the reason for popular expositions of large and intricate subjects, such as the Pacific from Genesis to Christian missions. Mr. van Loon has made a good attempt at it, but we are no better off. The Pacific, as he shows it, would convince most readers of his story that it has no meaning, and that henceforth they will have no more to do with it.

H. M. TOMLINSON

GRAMOPHONE NOTES

THE conception of Liberty was one which Beethoven was peculiarly well fitted to understand: nobody has ever been recorded as bearing constraint less well. Hence, no doubt, his enthusiasm for the not very adroit libretto of *Fidelio.* But, being a man of creative genius, he also understood Authoritarianism and could sympathise with the rather second-rate pathos of its protagonists; so that when he came to portray the character of that early Fascist, Coriolanus, the result was almost as overwhelming as the music he found to express Florestan's desperate hope. Listeners who are interested in musical psychology are offered, this month, those two stupendous symphonic poems, *Leonora No.* 3 and the *Coriolan Overture.* Professor Tovey (I make no apology for continually quoting this great man) insists that *Leonora No.* 2, which we had last month, is pure theatre music and *not* a sketch for the later symphonic poem, in spite of the close resemblance between them. I find this argument interesting and clever, but too paradoxical: the difference between the two works seems to me hardly great enough to warrant two such distinct interpretations. What is quite certain, however, is that *Leonora No.* 3 was never intended as a prelude to the opera. How far Mahler was justified in introducing it in between the scenes of the second act, like a Wagnerian *Verwandlungsmusik*, is questionable. Personally, I have always felt it to be a stroke of genius in performance (the curtain slowly falling to the accompaniment of that procession of descending octaves) and do not find that it makes the music of the last scene sound trivial, because the quartet towards the end of that scene is, I should have thought, sublime enough to bear any weight. Toscanini and the N.B.C. Symphony Orchestra (H.M.V.) achieve as fine a recording as they did of *Leonora No.* 2*;* the first flute solo sounds particularly lovely, and, of course, the sudden juxtapositions—so dear to Beethoven—of *pp* and *ff* are calculated to bring out the most remarkable features of Toscanini's conducting. The aggregate effect of magnificence and enthusiasm is thrilling. I cannot speak so highly of the new *Coriolan* disc. The recording is good—clear and not coarse—but the performance, by the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra under Dimitri Mitropoulos (Col.), cannot be said to be a very nervous one: one does not feel that tautness of rhythm and texture which is essential if the working-out is not to drag. The old recording, by Walter and the L.S.O., is still the better.

Mozart's enchanting *Symphony in D* (K. 504) is most unlike a tone-poem; yet I am not altogether sure that he did not intend it as a kind of epilogue to *Figaro*—as it were a symphonic commentary on the action, to be heard the next day (as perhaps *Leonora No.* 3 should be heard). Written in 1786, this was Mozart's last symphony before the final three. It was first given in Prague, to which the composer had repaired, at the invitation of Count Thun, to witness the success of *Figaro.* (Those who are interested are advised to look up Mörike's beautiful short story, "Mozart on the Journey to Prague.") The orchestral lay-out is strikingly similar to that in the opera. The first allegro begins with one of those weak-beat themes of which the mature Mozart was so fond; there is no minuet, perhaps because of the length of the preliminary adagio and of the exquisite andante. The old recording, by Walter and the Vienna Philharmonic, is shrill and out of date; the new one, by Sir Thomas Beecham and the L.P.O. (Col.), has all the virtues of English recording at its best.

Rachmaninoff recordings are coming thick and fast. Is it too much to hope that we may soon have a set of the *Third Symphony?* After the latter I think the *Third Piano Concerto in D minor* is indubitably the composer's finest, as well as his most characteristic, work. The form—a development from Tchaikovsky's *B flat minor Concerto*—is at once freer and better organised than in the case of the first two concertos: Rachmaninoff has solved his problem of rendering sonata form elastic by the skilful introduction of rhapsodic and cadenza-like passages into the body of the movements, without producing an effect of inflation. The whole work, which lasts for forty minutes, must be by far the most technically exorbitant and fatiguing ever written for the instrument, and it takes one's breath away to witness the ease with which this master of sixty-seven keeps it up. The richness and steely delicacy of his playing is, unfortunately, not well rendered in the new set; the piano tone is very metallic and unresonant, with far too little bass, and the orchestra (the Philadelphia under Ormandy) sounds very confused in the *tutti.* The old Horowitz recording was much better in these respects; but the composer gives a "straighter" reading, less instinct with conscious virtuosity. At the same time, he contrives to make the Finale even more exciting: the end calls up the image of a squadron of fighter aircraft in operation. With all its shortcomings, then, I do not think this set should be missed (H.M.V.).

Anybody who still feels like denying the originality of Liszt should buy Louis Kentner's recording of the *Scherzo and March* (Col.). Why is this magnificently brilliant piece not more often heard? It was written in the middle of Liszt's career as a composer, two years after that monument of romanticism, the *Sonata in B minor*, and it is a kind of tone-poem for piano, full of mysterious pictorial passages and rhetorical gestures. It would make an admirable accompaniment to a ballet. Kentner's performance is beyond praise: he produces, at one point, a kind of pianissimo fluttering that is extraordinarily apt. Specialists and non-specialists alike are urged not to let slip this very curious and beautiful work, which may well not be recorded again for many a year.

On the other hand, I cannot feel very enthusiastic about Schubert's *Rondo in B minor*, "op. 70," for violin and piano. I wish some scholar would clear up, once and for all, the vexed question of Schubert's opus numbers and produce an index in order of composition; there is no rhyme or reason in the distribution which obtains at present. The Rondo belongs to 1826 and has about the same musical value as the *Divertissement à la Hongroise* which I reviewed last month. It is, however, more of a virtuoso piece, and hence, no doubt, its greater popularity. The introduction is the best part of it, though the Rondo itself is pretty enough. The Menuhins, brother and sister, achieve a good balance, but the violin is sometimes unpleasantly shrill (H.M.V.).

In Handel's view, the Queen of Sheba must have been a far from stately figure, judging by her "Arrival" in the opera *Solomon.* Something of her hasty tempo seems to have infected the two-piano-duet version of "Sheep may safely graze" from Bach's *Birthday Cantata.* The beauty of this wonderful chorale resides in the contrast between the slow legato of the voices and strings and the gently rocking woodwind figuration. In William Walton's *Wise Virgins* suite, the transcription was perfectly effective; on the piano nothing but a jaunty, all-overish texture is achieved. Ethel Bartlett and Rae Robertson (Col.) can do better.

"Still Night, Holy Night" touches most hearts, and John McCormack (H.M.V.) makes of it what we should expect—something deeply felt, yet expressed with the deceptive ease and perfect diction that confers an improvisatory air of great charm. Tchaikovsky's "Legend—Christ in His Garden," on the obverse, is stolidly Russian-Orthodox and perhaps a little dull.

EDWARD SACKVILLE WEST

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Survey of London. Vol. XX. Trafalgar Square and Neighbourhood. L.C.C. 21*s*.

This volume in the L.C.C.'s massive survey of London is Part III of the parish of St.-Martin-in-the-Fields. It includes Trafalgar Square, Carlton House Terrace, St. Martin's Church, the Haymarket. A frontispiece shows changes that have occurred since 1874: the disappearance of Spring Gardens and of the workhouse, barracks and parade ground behind the National Gallery; the building of new streets, of which Northumberland Avenue and Charing Cross Road are the most important. These alterations, spread over a period of sixty-six years, seem minute compared with what any week of bombing may bring in the winter months. If some of the famous edifices in this area are to be hit and others not, we must hope that Göring's Heinkels will pick the right ones. As a start, we could do without quite a number of monuments. In and near the Square itself Landseer's lions, with their look of politicians past the retiring age, might well be finished with; George IV, and Generals Gordon, Havelock and Napier could go too, without unduly distressing the eye. And the Cavell statue—but that is perhaps too much to hope. It was a stroke of genius—our public sculpture being what it is—that induced Edward Hodges Baily to raise his figure of Nelson so high that no one could judge of its merits. The Survey describes these monuments with the same impassivity that it would keep, no doubt, if one of the sculptors had been Michelangelo. But, of course, many acres of stone and brick in this neighbourhood deserve immunity. The National Gallery and St. Martin's Church provide one of the few corners in London possessing civic dignity, and Carlton House Terrace, having been saved from our own Visigoths, will escape, one hopes, further attention from Hitler's. There is more of the eighteenth century worth looking at in some of the side-streets between Haymarket and St. Martin's than most Londoners are aware of. The Survey provides, as usual, a record of an admirable kind, with a large number of illustrations, and if Trafalgar Square and its neighbourhood should ever need a valediction, here in the most matter-of-fact form it is.

Four to Fourteen: A List of Books for Boys and Girls. Selected by KATHARINE LINES. Distributed by the National Book Council. 9*d*.

This catalogue of books for children should be most useful to parents and children's librarians. The arrangement is clear and logical and the comments beneath each book are pointed and informative. Miss Lines has covered a wide range, and where we have tested it, her taste is catholic but sound. The list is being sponsored by the British Council for distribution abroad. This seems a pleasant gesture, if not a very useful one. But at home the catalogue should serve a really useful purpose.

Week-end Competitions

No. 569

Set by Mary Nicholson

In ancient times the supernatural signs which preceded great events were somewhat standardised. The usual prizes are offered for a set of original portents which might herald:

(1) A New Year's Day invasion, (2) The Destruction of the NEW STATESMEN AND NATION offices by enemy action. (3) The entry of the Greeks into Rome. (4) The appointment of Charles Chaplin as Ambassador to London. (5) The marriage of Hitler to an Aryan maiden.

Special Christmas Competition

The mottoes in Christmas Crackers are usually moralising couplets which may or may not be suitable to those who open them. Competitors are asked to write a set of five mottoes each suitable for any sufficiently well-known person or body, from a member of the Cabinet to the *Daily Express*.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Turnstile, W.C.1. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Monday, January 6th.

2. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

RESULT OF COMPETITION No. 566

Set by V. S. Pritchett

Parents preserve their children's early writings and in the case of great writers, these childish works often foreshadow something of the character of what is to come. The usual prizes are offered for an extract of three hundred words from the childish essay on How I Spent My Summer Holidays by any one of the following: D. H. Lawrence, H. G. Wells, Bertrand Russell, Miss Compton Burnett, W. H. Auden, Ernest Hemingway, Thomas Hardy, and Somerset Maugham.

Report by V. S. Pritchett

The entries were few but the standard was high. The infant Thomas Hardy got the best average results, but he was easy. D. H. Lawrence, who looks easy, did not cause originality. I fancy competitors ought to have left sex alone here and tried some pious writings. I am sure D. H. Lawrence's childish essays were very priggish. Sex was quite right for the Somerset Maughams and although none of these were good enough I liked C. H. Bedwell's sentence about the nurse who smiled at men on the beach "in her mornings for the sake of her evenings." A note of authentic prophecy there. L. V. Upwood had a rather precocious Hemingway and P. Terry was even better with his "Anytime now I'd get Bud's nose. Blood doesn't show on sand. I read that somewhere." Bertrand Russell was the most difficult of all, I think, and the entries filled me with awe. H. W. Poole was the best here. His opening sentence is superb: "I spent my holidays in Bedford, where my people have some land." I.R.I.S. opened very funnily with Wells:

"I played 'house' with the farmer's three daughters. They cried because they could not pay the rent. I was the landlord and said you need not pay any rent but I will marry you instead. They said landlords don't marry farmers' daughters. I said we will play it is 100 years later and landlords are sensible. They said but you can't have three wives it is in the Bible, so I said we will play it is 200 years later and everyone does what they think best not what is in the Bible."

Hassall Pitman did a very good Lawrence of the serious and probable kind. G. de Vavasour pictured the young Hardy in the graveyard wondering "if the dead people worried about their farms" and he struck a true note of comic eeriness in his description of the farm lodges: "They said their father was miserable because they were too many. It made me feel queer to see them. They went soon after, in the middle of the night." I was torn between this entry, another good Hardy by L. Marshall Jones, Allan M. Laing's Russell which had fun with Hall and Knight, Mr. Robert Waller's subtle Auden with its dreadful intimation of psycho-analysis and a farcical Wells by Patrick Thornhill. The best thing is to split the prize, but since this is Christmas, not too small. So I suggest it is divided between Mr. Vavasour, Mr. Thornhill and Robert Waller. The second will be a strain on the printer.

How I Spent My Summer Holidays. Thomas Hardy. Aged 10.

In the holidays I went to stay on my godmother's farm. It was near the church, I often went there in the afternoon and made rubbings of the brasses, the Vicar showed me how. In the evening I often walked back through the churchyard, it was so ghostly, when the sun set it made all the windows red like fire and the shadows on the grey stones were all purple. My godmother said the grass grew greener in the churchyard than anywhere else. I often wondered if the dead people worried about their farms and things they had left behind them, or if it didn't matter to them any more.

There weren't many other boys, the ones on the farm were always busy and they were older than me except Crazy Dick who shouted at the crows. There were four children and their mother and father came to stay in Mrs. Webb's cottage, they were lodgers, but they wouldn't play, they said their father was miserable because they were too many. It made me feel queer to see them. They went soon after, in the middle of the night my godmother said.

One of the dairymaids told me stories sometimes. She had dark brown hair the same colour as a field which has just been ploughed, and her eyes were blue. She said that her people were great lords and she nearly always seemed to be thinking to herself instead of speaking or laughing. I liked to watch her milking the cows and churning the butter. Once she told me that Bob the ploughman tried to sell his wife on a Fair day.

I read some books as well, Fox's Book of Martyrs, the Seasons, a poem by Thomson which had some good parts about the country and the Mysteries of Udolpho.

That is how I spent my holidays.

G. DE VAVASOUR

Bertie Wells. Aged 9.

How I Spent my Summer Holidays.

One week I stopped at my Aunties at the seaside. I got a srimp net and I caught an octopus (bathypollypus). Dr. Bianco suceeded in killing crabs exprementaly by injecting extracts of the salivry gland of (the) an octopus. (and) I got a crab but when I come back the octapus had dissaperd.

Thursday afternoon I saw a man selling sherbert and I went to purchase a frujal packet. A girl my size in a fancy pinny stood there. Her eyes were like the sea and her hair was the couler of conquers fresh out of their shucks. She looked like a toff. I buot two packets for a penny and I gives her one.

She says what do you do with it? So I said tare off the corner and suck it out. She smiled and it made me feel funny but when she sucked she inhailed the sherbert into her oesaphogus and nearly choked. While in this pradictament her erstwhile governace apeared and bore her hence. . . .

The sherbert man, whose swarthy features betrayd his orientile extracution, said why did she go off like that?

Your sherbert I replied! our hero.

No I mean go away like that returned he.

Ah I said little do you know of the intricket class structur of Victorian England. It is stratyfied like the cretacious chalk of the Downs up there. Fossilised. thats what we are, and she is Micraster cor-anguinium while you and me are Holaster subglobbosus.

Then he clips me acrost the ear and I done a bunk.

Friday I (sat) mucked (about) round there again but the lovely creature never come back. . . .

Saturday I came home. . . .

Thus by outworn sosial codes are our lives fustrated.

Homo Sapines we call ourselves but are we?

PATRICK THORNHILL

How I Spent My Summer Holidays. (Wystie Auden.)

Well this yeer my holiday was again quite spolied by uncle Gabriel who kept taking me to what is called places of Intrest &c. why I don't get on with my uncle I know is because I awfully much enjoy doing what isn't very expensive like sitting on the grass. He won't even through stones at the waves though he will pay for you to through balls at skittles, Uncle. won a box of chockolates but I hated the way he laft as though that was the last thing he thought of the prize was and handed them to me without looking, like his mind is on superior thoughts &c. He has no superior thoughts though really though, he e.g. hums Valensier and Nuts of Barselonier whenever he's absent in mind not the Misery &c. from Ill Trovatillery by Verdi (Vittore Emmanuel Re d'Italia) like the coalman all the way through. It made me feel silly I couldn't hit those skittles specially the way he laft to the attendant as if I wasn't trying really except once I hit the attendant by mystake only I read a book that says by mystake you mean it more than anything. &c. In a way.

Back at uncle's hôtel, there wer a lot of red faces they do nothing only eat & smoke &c. & if I laft at these it made uncle very stupid also almost angry when the manajer asked if he would go now, he said he had never been treated in that way, a notorious lie we were sent down from the Theatre Royl even when I was in the middle of an intresting conversation with the Hero, but he didn't seem to mind.

Uncle is a fool too he likes poetry & he even reads it sometimes, Hiawather is not easy but The Kerfew Toles The Nell Of Parting Day is more notorious I think, uncle is too rich & too old though. I don't see what use money is to you after you are twenty. Wystie Auden.

ROBERT WALLER

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

By CYNICUS

THE STOCK EXCHANGE YEAR—THE REFORM OF E.P.T.

THE Christmas rush on the Stock Exchange is conspicuous by its absence. Business has fallen to negligible proportions and the steam has gone out of the oil share market. Anglo-Iranian ordinary shares, which had risen from 27*s.* 6*d.* to 42*s.* 6*d.* in twelve days, came back sharply to under 37*s.*—with jobbers refusing to make a price in over 250 shares. On the whole, investors cannot grumble at the behaviour of the stock markets for the past twelve months. According to the *Investors' Chronicle* Index, industrial ordinary shares will end the year with a decline of around 10 per cent. There have, of course, been exceptionally heavy declines in certain markets—for example, home railways—but taking the Index of all securities combined—fixed interest and equity—the year's decline will be under 10 per cent. It will be interesting to see how the Insurance Companies have fared with their Stock Exchange investments. Valuations will, of course, be postponed, but I hope the Chairmen at the annual meetings will disclose their Stock Exchange positions.

* * *

Even Mr. Douglas Jay, who persistently advocates an annual capital tax, disapproves of a 100 per cent. Excess Profits Tax. Everyone knows, except our legislators, that E.P.T. falls harshly upon mining companies or upon those which have no good profits standard in the basic years, either because they were then making losses or because they were not yet born. The Trinidad oil companies and the tin-mining companies have generally made representations to the Government for relief on the grounds that they are mining a rapidly wasting asset, and should, therefore, have a much higher percentage for depreciation or obsolescence. The short-life tin mines are especially hit because they have been asked to produce at 130 per cent. of standard to satisfy American war demands and yet have these "excess" profits, which represent in effect a return of capital, confiscated. These are the publicised cases of hardship, but it is just as unfair to penalise the industrial company, which is slowly emerging "from the red," by refusing to allow it to write off past losses against present-day profits. To prevent a company restoring its finances so that it will be unable to turn its plant over from war to peaceful production when the time comes is not good sense for the community or for the workers.

* * *

But the Excess Profits Tax should not be condemned only for its unfair incidence but for its incentive to spending. It is really an inflationary tax, because directors and works managers, smarting under its injustices, are deliberately renewing their plant, tools and equipment, not to mention increasing their personal expenditures, at the expense of E.P.T. A great deal of this civilian buying for capital purposes is put through in the guise of war orders. A revision of the incidence of E.P.T. and a reduction from 100 per cent. to, say, 80 per cent. (Mr. Douglas Jay calls for 90 per cent.) are really overdue reforms which would help our war effort. Why, then, are they not carried out? Because the Labour Party, when it joined the Government, wanted to make a show of waving the Socialist flag. "To take the profit out of the war" was a good Labour slogan, even if it did not stop directors and works managers enriching themselves out of the Excess Profits Tax. This piece of political hypocrisy played, of course, into the hands of big business. The large wealthy corporations, long and soundly established, like the tobacco and beer companies, with a good pre-war profits standard, have little or no Excess Profits Tax to pay. On the principle that the richer you were before the war, the less you will pay to-day, these companies escape altogether their proper contribution to the burdensome finance of the war. Therefore I plead: reduce E.P.T. from 100 per cent. to 80 per cent., revise and increase N.D.C. (National Defence Contribution) from 5 per cent. to 20 per cent. At the same time, revise the incidence of E.P.T. and meet the hard cases.

Company Meeting

BARCLAYS BANK (DOMINION, COLONIAL AND OVERSEAS)

Record Figures

The Fifteenth Ordinary General Meeting of the above Company was held in London, on Monday, 23rd December, Sir John Caulcutt, K.C.M.G., the Chairman, presiding. In his opening remarks the Chairman referred with profound regret to the great loss the Bank had sustained through the death of Mr. H. L. M. Tritton, a former Chairman of the Bank.

Improved Net Profit.

Continuing, the Chairman said: It will be seen that the Current and Deposit Accounts, at £126,500,725, show an increase of nearly £20,000,000 on last year, and easily constitute a record figure for this Bank.

Cash in Hand, at £42,416,905, has increased by nearly £8,000,000, and represents a ratio of approximately 33 per cent. to Liabilities.

The Net Profit for the year ended 30th September, 1940, after making provision for taxation and for Bad and Doubtful Debts and Contingencies, amounted to £423,692 2s. 5d., an improvement of approximately £9,000 on the previous year. The sum of £154,442 0s. 8d. was brought forward from 1st October, 1939, making a total to be dealt with of £578,134 3s. 1d. A sum of £200,000 has been carried to Contingency Account, compared with £170,000 last year. After making this appropriation it is proposed to pay a Final Dividend of 4 per cent. (actual) on the Cumulative Preference Shares, less Income Tax at 8s. 4d. in the £, and 3½ per cent. (actual) on the "A" and "B" Shares, less Income Tax at 7s. 4d. in the £ payable on the 28th December, 1940, leaving £171,936 9s. 4d. to be carried forward.

Having regard to the fact that, in the national interest, certain figures are withheld from publication which relate to the business and production of many of the territories in which this Bank operates, we have decided to omit on this occasion the Summary of Conditions which has hitherto accompanied the Report of the Annual Meeting.

Union of South Africa.

In the Union of South Africa the hesitant business outlook which followed the outbreak of war had largely disappeared by the end of 1939, and since then business has continued on quietly steady lines.

A substantial increase was recorded in preliminary figures of the Union's external trade during the first months of this year, and a healthy undertone is evident. The loss of Continental markets which formerly absorbed a large portion of the Union's wool and maize exports has been made good by the conclusion of an arrangement under which these two commodities, amongst others, are being sold to Great Britain.

Negotiations with the United Kingdom regarding disposal of the 1940-41 wool clip culminated in an agreement in August last whereby the British Government undertook to purchase the whole South African clip for the duration of the war and one year thereafter.

An interesting development, affecting both industry and finance, has been the formation in September last of the Industrial Development Corporation of South Africa Ltd., having a capital of £5,000,000 subscribed by the Union Government. Its objects are to promote and assist in the financing of new industries and the improvement of existing concerns. It should ensure that full advantage will be taken of present conditions and that industries established during the War will survive as permanent economic undertakings.

A brief review of conditions in some of the territories served by our Bank underlines once again the immense significance, from the economic point of view, of the measures taken by the British Government to purchase so many of the primary products or surpluses which may be offering. While at the outset this policy had the effect of restricting any undue rise in prices, it must in the long run be of great assistance to producers to whom it gives an assured and stable market for their produce. Moreover, the avoidance of inflated prices during the War should do much to mitigate reaction when normal conditions return.

I will not presume to deal with the splendid contributions to the common cause by the Dominions and Colonies and Egypt and the Sudan, but their scope and nature assuredly inspire us to view the outcome with confidence.

A Unique Position

It is gratifying to know that the Bank is uniquely placed to play its part on the economic and financial side, and I am glad to be able to give you such a satisfactory report of our past year's working.

It gives me the greatest pleasure to express the board's warmest thanks and appreciation to the various boards overseas, the general managers in London and in South Africa, and to the whole of the staff for the loyal manner in which they are carrying out their duties in particularly trying times. I may say that their interests are our constant concern, and we are doing all that we can to mitigate the hardships imposed by the abnormal conditions. In spite of the difficulties, and, in many places, also of the dangers with which our staff have had to contend, the business of the bank has been carried on with smoothness and efficiency.

In conclusion, I wish to refer especially to the particularly heavy burdens which in recent months have fallen upon our Local Control Centres. From my knowledge of the men on whom rests the responsibility of administering the affairs of this bank throughout its territories overseas, I feel that the shareholders are justified in looking forward with confidence to the future progress of their business.

The report was unanimously adopted.

Company Meeting

CARRERAS, LIMITED

PROFITS EXCEED £2,000,000

THE Thirty-seventh Annual General Meeting of Carreras, Ltd., was held on Dec. 20 in London.

MR. EDWARD S. BARON, Chairman and Managing Director, who presided, said: The Board are very gratified that, notwithstanding the great difficulties which we all find in working under present-day conditions, it has been possible to place these accounts before the shareholders and to pay our final dividend only one day later than last year.

The net profit for the year is £2,122,379, which is yet another record for the Company. This result, achieved in a year of unprecedented difficulty, is a sure indication of the unvarying quality of our products and the reputation which we have won in a highly competitive field. The profit available for distribution amounts to £2,416,482, from which it is necessary to allocate the huge sum of £1,072,955 for taxation.

Various observations and representations have been made recently regarding the 100 per cent. rate of Excess Profits Tax, and most of these I would like to endorse. This particular tax at its present level will, in my opinion, impose a serious handicap on the development of industry for many years to come, besides discouraging effort and initiative.

In the case of this Company our profits in 1936, one of the standard years, were £1,227,000, and in successive years there has been an increase until the past year shows a profit of £2,122,000; these are not increases due to war conditions, but brought about by the progressive development of our business, helped by the enterprise of the management.

Having deducted the amount required for taxation, less than half of the net profit remains for other purposes. It is proposed that a final dividend of 15 per cent. shall be paid, making 26¾ per cent. for the year, which will necessitate reducing the carry-forward slightly to £276,447. In spite of the many difficulties of the past year, we are now working at full capacity.

All our overseas factories are in the Empire, and our losses through customers in enemy-occupied countries are negligible. The report was unanimously adopted.

ALL ADVERTISEMENTS are accepted subject to the management's approval and right to amend or to refuse any advertisement whether paid for or not.

LECTURES AND MEETINGS

ETHICAL CHURCH, Queensway, Bayswater, W.2. Morning Service only. December 29th, at 11.30. URSULA EDGCUMBE: "The Unreasonableness of Selfishness."

24 UNIVERSITY OF LONDON Extension Lectures on "SOCIAL PHILOSOPHY" begin at 11 a.m. on Sunday, January 5th, 1941, at the new premises of the Institute for the Scientific Treatment of Delinquency, 17 Manchester Street, London, W.1 (Welbeck 6037). Syllabus on application. Full particulars in issue of December 7.

SCHOOLS AND EDUCATIONAL

BRECHIN PLACE SCHOOL. Apply Mrs. E. M. Spencer, 11 Brechin Place, Gloucester Road, S.W.7.

BEDALES SCHOOL, PETERSFIELD, HANTS. (Founded 1893.) A progressive public school for boys and girls from 11–19. Separate junior school for those from 5–11. Inspected by the Board of Education. Country estate of 150 acres. Home Farm. SCHOLARSHIPS of £100, £60, £30. Headmaster: F. A. Meier, M.A. (Camb.).

BROOKLANDS, Crowborough 299. Pre-prep. and Nursery School. All-year-round home. Sound early education and training. Good health record. Excellent air-raid precautions.

DEVON. ST. GEORGE'S CHILDREN'S HOUSE, Belstone, Nr. Okehampton (evacuated from Harpenden), has vacancies for Boarders 2 to 9 years, for short or long periods. Particulars from Miss D. I. Matthews.

MONKTON WYLD SCHOOL, Nr. CHARMOUTH, DORSET. A new school for boys and girls, 3–18 years. Secluded position. Own farm produce. Principals: Eleanor Urban, M.A., Humphrey Swingler, M.A. Write to the Secretary for prospectus.

BUNCE COURT SCHOOL, now Trench Hall, WEM, Salop. Tel.: Wem 172. Principal: Anna Essinger, M.A.

BELTANE SCHOOL, Shaw Hill, Melksham, Wilts. Boys and girls from five to eighteen years. Good academic standards. Undisturbed district.

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For information apply The Headmaster.

THE FROEBEL PREPARATORY SCHOOL, Little Gaddesden, Herts. Sound modern education for boys and girls from 5 to 14 years old. Inclusive boarding fee. Headmistress: Miss O. B. Priestman, B.A., N.F.U.

MAPSTONE HOME SCHOOL, Lustleigh, Devon. Safe area, two houses, 500ft. above sea level. Entire care taken of children from 2 upwards. Term or holidays. Home-baking, farm and garden produce. Write Prospectus.

QUIET Area. Cornwall. Hollington Park School for Girls, St. Leonards-on-Sea, at The Bay Hotel, St. Ives. Recognised by Board of Education, ages 8 to 18, boarders only; 100% School Certificate successes. All games. Graduate staff. Parents accommodated. Open holidays.

THE BYRON HOUSE SCHOOL (Highgate Village, N.6), recognised by B. of E., is well established at The ORCHARD, Huntingdon Road, CAMBRIDGE, as a boarding and day school for girls and boys aged 3–13 years. Prospectus and information about vacancies for January from the Secretary. Tel.: Cam. 3817.

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ST. MARY'S SCHOOL, Wedderburn Road, Hampstead, now at Yarkhill Court, nr. Hereford (Tel.: Tarrington 233). Boys and girls, 4–16. Emphasis on languages. Special teaching methods. Modern dietary. Mrs. E. Paul, Ph.D.

SCOTLAND. Beverley Nursery School, Aberfoyle. A few vacancies for children 2 to 9 years in progressive atmosphere, special attention to diet and health, music and art. Particulars on application to the Principal.

BADMINTON SCHOOL at The TORS HOTEL, LYNMOUTH, N. DEVON. The School has moved from Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol, to the above address for the duration of the war. For particulars apply to the Secretary.

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